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JULY '01

# SOUND CHECK

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*T★HOUSE of the almighty*  
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## BSM The Editorial

All of us at *SoundCheck* are thrilled about the addition of advice columnist Dr Rock to the staff. Dr. Sebastian Rock is the Director of Clinical Studies at the prestigious Institute for Truth Through Sheer Volume on the beautiful Caribbean island of Del Fuego. He is also co-author of the best-seller *Red Meat and Raw Power: The Iggy Pop Diet* (Redpackback Press). We hope you find the good Doctor as informative and entertaining as we do.

- Jesse Mayer, Managing Editor

Always fresh even in the midst of these hot July days, *SoundCheck* this month also welcomes a new vision to the magazine with photographer Kim Genereux. Kim shot the sizzling cover for our feature on Boston band CRACKTORCH. With the cover and the inside shots, Kim captured visually what Jesse Mayer captured in words in his great interview with all the members of CRACKTORCH, this year's runners-up in WBCN's Rock 'n' Roll Rumble.

This issue offers another new voice as well - check out new *SoundCheck* writer Duncan Wilder Johnson's piece on Epitaph recording artists The Bouncing Souls, beginning on Page 24. A national punk rock act, The Bouncing Souls will be one of the bands headlining this year's Vans Warped Tour (along with Pennywise, Rancid, and more - see Page 7 for a complete list of this year's lineup).

You've been reading their reviews for the past year but this month staff writers Ma-c I and \*Samantha\* both contributed interviews to the pages of *SoundCheck*. Ma-c I interviewed Boston group The High Ceilings, which starts on Page 26; while \*Samantha\* did a piece on another Boston act T-House Of The Almighty, you can check that out on Page 30.

Last month you may recall Janet Caliri wrote a piece entitled "The Power of Professional Photography," be sure to hold onto these issues for future reference as often our educational pieces all tie in together. For example, this month I give an overview of the importance of image, which begins on Page 22, called, well... "The Importance Of Image." This could be considered a companion piece to Janet's as well as to Karl Russo's "Know Your Industry" column, for this month he begins covering "The Promo Kit: Part One."

Until next month, stay cool but of course keep rocking....!

- Debbie Catalano, Managing Editor



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# CRACKTORCH

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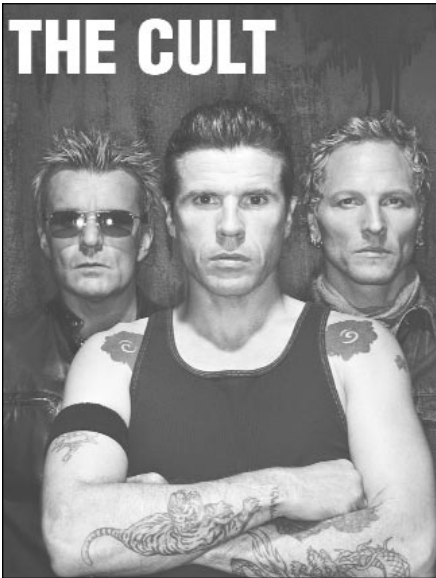
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"It's O.K., no one is watching anymore. You have permission to rock again." **The Cult's Ian Astbury** on stage in Austin, TX, March 17, 2001. Valiant Saint Ian and the bombastic beauty that is The Cult. *Their Beyond Good and Evil Tone* with brothers in amps **Monster Magnet** (who've forgotten more about narcotics than you will ever know) and **Stabbing Westward** drops on Worcester's Palladium on Tuesday, July 10th. "This ain't nostalgic," says Astbury "This is a spiritual holy war." Well, from what I saw at the 'BCN River Rave, The Cult aim to win their war. And that was during the daytime! The nighttime Worcester gig will truly be a gathering of the tribes at the altar of rockdom. Be there....

While at The Livingroom in Providence, **Meat Depressed** had their van broken into. The band lost: a '78 Les Paul Custom (blue), a black custom Fender Jaguar (locking tuning pegs, humbucker in tail position and a roller nut, nick on neck at 5th fret), a blue Fender Jazz Bass SN: MN1101605, a Fender Bass Head 300R BXR SN: LO-212920. If you've seen any of this, please call (508) 698-0393.....

Boston Motorpunks **Rock City Crimewave** will be performing at The Middle East Upstairs Friday July 6th to celebrate the release of their debut full-length CD *Sounds From The Underworld*. The CD comes out on local label Catapult Records on July 3rd. The festivities will also include **CRACKTORCH**, **Medea Connection**, **The Beatings**, **Crash and Burn**, and **Swamp Witch Revival**. The Middle East is located at 480 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge MA. Tickets can be purchased at the Middle East box office

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and through all Ticketmaster outlets. The show is 18+, \$8, and doors open at 8 p.m. Please call (617) 864-EAST for more information.

**Yoke Shire** will be one of the bands featured at the first annual NH Freedom Festival to be held at Veterans Park in Manchester, NH from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m on Friday, July 13. The event is free and is a NORML political rally including speakers who will be addressing various hemp and marijuana issues including alternative energy, medicinal and recreational uses of this important plant. Yoke Shire will be unveiling brand new material and encourages everyone who is able to attend this worthwhile event. For more information visit [www.yokeshire.com](http://www.yokeshire.com) or [www.nhorml.org](http://www.nhorml.org)....

The biggest party of the summer is coming up on Friday, August 24th, 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. when **The Buckners**, along with **Where's Holden**, play aboard the 3rd Annual Boat Cruise Party to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Departing from Long Wharf, Boston Harbor, the ticket price is \$20, which includes two complimentary drinks, a raffle, and a three-hour ride around Boston Harbor with 400 other guests. Tickets are available only in advance, as the event has sold out for the past two years. Please arrive between 7:30-7:45 p.m for boarding. The boat will leave at exactly 8:00 p.m. The rest of the information you need, including online ticket sales, is available at the website, [www.geocities.com/boat-cruiseparty](http://www.geocities.com/boat-cruiseparty) or contact Johnette Kao at (617) 803-1943 or e-mail: [LukeMcInnis@boat-cruiseparty@yahoo.com](mailto:LukeMcInnis@boat-cruiseparty@yahoo.com). In other Buckners' news **Pete Engel** of Waltham, MA has joined **The Buckners** on drums. Also, **Mark Stuart** of Brookline, MA has joined the band on lead guitar....

**TREE** is returning from their very successful tour with Clutch. Their newest CD *No Regrets No Remorse* is kicking ass. Catch them live at: Warped Tour August 9 at Suffolk Downs, Route 1-A East Boston, MA; also August 10 Toad's, New Haven, CT with **Gargantua Soul**....

**Duncan Wilder Johnson's** new CD *Destruct-a-thon* is almost done. It has spoken word and heavy duty rock with **Michele "666" Morgan**, **Nate Linehan** (formerly of **A.C.**), and **Shon-Shon Linehan** (bass for **Grudgefuck**), and **Hillside 1-7-6**. Plus, there will be a video. Throw the CD in your computer and watch Duncan do spoken word about **Scissorfight**. Duncan live dates include: Tuesday July 3 at 7:30 p.m., Herrell's, Corner of Harvard and



**Suffolk Downs - Thursday August 9th**

AFI, Alien Ant Farm  
The Ataris, Big Wig  
Bouncing Souls, Catch 22, D12  
Dropkick Murphys, Fenix TX  
Flogging Molly, Grade, Grand  
Theft Audio, H2O, Jaya The Cat  
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After a lengthy search, Boston heavy rock band **Every Second** are proud to announce the addition of their latest member, **Rob Davis** (guitarist formerly of the band **Indesit**). The band would like to thank all the musicians who have filled in over the past year or so: **Pat Tapia (OHM)**, **Mike Marchand (NOK)**, **Shippey (Nullset)**, **Bob Mayo (Wargasm)**, **G-Krank (Krank Squad)**, **Rich Spillberg (Wargasm/Bitter)**, and **Rob Lohr (D-con)**. The band will be spending the next few months in the studio working with **Rich Spillberg**, producing a full-length album. Look forward to the finished product by summer's end. Visit their completely revamped website at : [www.everysecond.com](http://www.everysecond.com)....

Punk rockers, are gearing up for the release of **Good Riddance's** latest full-length, *Symptoms of a Leveling Spirit*, which hits stores July 10th. This new record has 14 songs of top-notch melodic hardcore all on an enhanced CD. Good Riddance has really hit their stride on this, their fifth full-length. Go to [www.fatwreck.com/junk/gr.html](http://www.fatwreck.com/junk/gr.html) for more on that....



**Fat Wreck Chords** seeks volunteers to help with website design and hosting. They're looking for someone who wants to volunteer their time and computer towards a new band website. They'll pay for any expenses and hook you up with CDs and shows and stuff, but you have to responsibly maintain a website for them. For more information, e-mail them with the subject heading "Web Work." If possible send them a link to some stuff you've done in the past. E-mail them at: [mailbag@fatwreck.com](mailto:mailbag@fatwreck.com) or go to [www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com) or write: Fat Wreck Chords, P.O. Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119

**Mike Previti's** song "On My Heel," which is off of his brand new CD has been added to rotation on NH station WERZ (107.1 FM). For more information about Mike Previti please visit his website at [www.mikepreviti.com](http://www.mikepreviti.com)....

**The Bacon Brothers, Michael and Kevin Bacon**, return to The Music Hall in Portsmouth, NH on July 20 for a celebrity performance featuring their unique blend of folk, rock, soul, and country. This show is the only statewide appearance in support of their newest release, *Can't Complain*, on Zoe Records. This release is another step forward for the brothers, expanding their instrumental palette and broadening their lyrical focus while still maintaining the spark that made their last two albums, *Forosoco* and *Getting There*, so fresh. After two world tours, their live performance certainly hasn't spoiled yet either. The Bacon Brothers are backed by **Paul Guzzone** on bass/vocals, **Marshal Rosenberg** on percussion, **Frank Vilardi** on drums, and **Ira Siegel** on electric guitar. Don't miss your chance to participate in an intimate evening of music with the multi-talented brothers and their band. Reserved seats are on sale now for \$28.50/\$26.50 at the box office, charge by phone at (603) 436-2400, or purchase online at [www.themusichall.org](http://www.themusichall.org)....

The Boston-based rock/trance trio **Seepeoples**, are currently recording their debut album at Renaissance Studios on Arlington St. The album is due out in mid-summer and will feature **Dana Colley of Morphine** as a guest. Seepeoples will be performing on July 27 at Blackhorse Tavern, Faneuil Hall, Boston. Visit [www.seepeoples.com](http://www.seepeoples.com) for the band's complete schedule, downloadable music, and the latest news....

Before anyone ever heard of the band **Boston**, their hit songs like "More Than A Feeling," or the name of their legendary vocalist **Brad Delp**, Delp was hard at work fronting the popular Danvers-based band, **The Monks**. The band was a regional favorite on the music scene from 1965 to 1969, working nearly every weekend to packed houses of New England clubs, colleges, and high schools. But after 1969, the original members all seemed to go their separate ways; some (like Delp) became successes in the music business and others found careers outside the industry. Today a twist-of-fate and a worthy cause have brought the original Monks back together after a 32-year separation. A special reunion concert will take place on Friday, July 27th at The Danversport Yacht Club in Danvers, MA from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., with proceeds going to support the Danvers group, "The Friends of Folly Hill-dedicated to land preservation in Danvers, MA." This benefit concert has brought together most of the original Monks members: Brad Delp (lead vocals), **Steve Cohen** (guitar, vocals), **Bobby Hayes** (guitar, vocals), **Steve Frary** (bass), and **Roger Kimball** (bass). The newest Monks now performing with the band are **Adam**

**Soreff** (drums), **Brian Maes** (keyboards, vocals), and **Gary Santarella** (acoustic guitar, vocals). Also appearing at the July event will be the popular band **Wilder Road** (Monks drummer, Adam Soreff, is also the drummer for Wilder Road) and **Gary Santarella**, who will be performing an acoustic set to open the show. For more information or advance tickets, call **Steve Prodanus** at (978) 774-2386 or **Flo Sagarino** at (978) 774-7097....

**Boston's Best Singer/Songwriter Showcase** (formerly called the "Showcase" but due to legal reasons has been renamed) will return to Hopkinton State Park on Saturday, July 7th (raindate 7/8), admission is FREE, but the state does charge a nominal parking fee. Artists TBA. Boston's Best Singer/Songwriter Showcase is coming to Holliston on July 11th and August 22nd four or five artists from the new Best of Boston Singer/Songwriter Showcase CD will appear at the Holliston Historical Society. For more information e-mail: DCNent2@aol.com.....

**The Attic** is a 21+ venue with live music four nights a week. The cover charge varies with each show and doors open at 9 p.m. on weekends. The Attic sits above the Union Street Restaurant, 107R Union Street, Newton Center, MA 02459, (617) 964-6684. If you come early for dinner, you get \$2 off the cover charge (with your dinner receipt). You can get more on Union Street Restaurant by visiting the website: [www.unionst.com](http://www.unionst.com). For booking information, contact **Elizabeth Cromer**, Talent Buyer, at (617) 964-6615 x18 on Mondays from 2-5 p.m. and Tuesdays from 11-2 p.m. (these are new booking hours). Starting in July, Thursday nights will feature a residency for a great band - **Almost Speechless**. They will be performing the first two Thursdays of every month....

Speaking of The Attic, **Kristian Montgomery** will hold his CD release party there on July 20. Kristian and his band put on a great live show, so stop by and check it out. For more details go to [www.antiherorecords.com](http://www.antiherorecords.com).....

**Mixed Emotions Music** (M.E.M.) Recording Studio has been keeping themselves busy for the first half of 2001 with lots of new projects and some renovations. To create some more space in the control



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room, they disposed of the rolling floor racks, mounted all the gear in the walls, and added a brand new Audio Accessories TT Bay with custom made Gepco wiring harness. Also, co-owner and engineer **Rich Durkee** worked out some more of his frustrated "Bob Villa/Norm Abrams syndrome" and built a fancy new desk to hold the O2R and the ProTools Pro Control (with some room left over for expansion - hopefully coming soon!!!). Earlier this year, Boston rock band **Primrose Path** came to Mixed Emotions to do some recording and all the mixing for their debut CD release titled *On TV*. This past May, engineer/producers **Rich Durkee** and **Kenny Lewis** finished tracking, mixing, and producing a new release due out in the summer of 2001 from Michigan born singer/songwriter **Keith Lewis**. As a compliment to Keith's energetic vocals and driving acoustic guitar, some Boston area favorites were brought in to add their talents to the making of this record: **Ken Clark** of the **Ken Clark Trio** on Hammond B3, **Russ Lawton**, best known for his work with **Phish** guitarist **Trey Anastasio**, **Rythmo Loco**, and the **Gordon Stone Band** on drums and percussion, **Jon Leccese** of **Percy Hill** on bass, and **Justin Slusher** of **Coppertree** on electric guitar. Another Boston favorite, eclectic rock band **Hurricane Jane**, was at M.E.M recently to record and mix tracks for two beautiful tunes to be included in an upcoming independent film. Currently, Mixed Emotions is finishing up tracking and mixing a new CD release from the bluegrass/jazz-influenced group, **the Gordon Stone Band**. If you would like any more information on Mixed Emotions, check out the website at [www.mixedemotionsmusic.com](http://www.mixedemotionsmusic.com) or call **Amy** at (978) 774-7413....

Sanctuary Records Group is pleased to announce that they have secured the signing of **Rollins Band**. Featuring rock legend, **Henry Rollins**, the band's debut album for the label, *Nice*, has been completed and is scheduled for an August 21st North American release. *Nice* is the evolutionary follow-up to Rollins Band's 2000 critically acclaimed *Get Some Go Again*. The band's now-steady lineup (since 1998) of Henry Rollins on vocals, guitarist **Jim Wilson**, bassist **Marcus Blake** and drummer **Jason Mackenroth** began work on the new album back in June 2000 between tour dates. When not playing with Henry, Jim, Marcus, and Jason also make up **Mother Superior**. Look for their CD (Triple X); it's well worth it. **Cliff Norrell**, who has been working with the band since 1997's *Come In And Burn*, engineered *Nice* at Cherokee Studios in Los Angeles. To celebrate the upcoming release, Rollins Band is already scheduled to perform on this years Vans Warped Tour (alongside such diverse acts as **Blink 182**, **New Found Glory**, **Rancid**, **311**, **Alien Ant Farm**, **Sum 41**, and **H2O**), which hits Boston on August 9th at Suffolk Downs, and will then embark on a headline tour in early fall. Be sure to visit: [www.henryrollins.com](http://www.henryrollins.com)....

**God Forbid** will return home from a sold out UK tour with just enough time to refuel before heading back out on a North American tour with Cradle of Filth and Nile. Since the release of its album, *Determination*, in April on Century Media Records, the five-piece has kept up a constant touring schedule, hitting the road with Nevermore, Opeth, Amen, and Shadows Fall, and most recently overseas with the UK's Stampin' Ground. This upcoming tour presents the opportunity for the band to firmly cement its already fierce reputation in the metal scene. The tour kicks off in Seattle, Washington on July 8 and continues through Oregon, California, Texas, Colorado, New York, Massachusetts, Canada, DC, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota. For a complete schedule go to [www.godforbid.com](http://www.godforbid.com) or [www.centurymedia.com](http://www.centurymedia.com).

Talk about true fan dedication, this is a first that we've heard of - UK-based **Marillion's** new album *Anoraknophobia* (Sanctuary Records) was financed entirely by their fans. More than 12,000 fans paid for the new record in advance, raising more than \$175,000. The recording of *Anoraknophobia*, Marillion's twelfth studio album in almost 20 years, was made possible after an Internet campaign was begun to ask fans to finance it. After contacting the 30,000 fans in the band's e-mail data base, enough fans prepaid for the album within three weeks. As a result, enough money was raised to cover the cost of making the new album. Vocalist **Steve Hogarth**, guitarist **Steven Rothery**, keyboardist **Mark Kelly**, bass guitarist **Pete Trewavas**, and drummer **Ian Mosley** were unhappy with the deals being offered by record companies. By asking fans to prepay for *Anoraknophobia*, a record company's "advance" money was unnecessary. This practice also allows Marillion to retain the rights to their music. Marillion has licensed *Anoraknophobia* to Sanctuary Records and EMI for worldwide distribution and marketing. Marillion has received crucial financial support from its fans before. In 1997, Kelly announced to fans that a North American tour was not possible from a financial standpoint. Unbeknownst to the band, the fans rallied and raised more than \$75,000 so that a North American run of shows could be undertaken. For up-to-the-minute Marillion news and tour information, visit [www.marillion.com](http://www.marillion.com).

KOCH Records, in cooperation with production/distribution company Shooting Gallery, Inc., is



# We the People

## NO FAN HERE



As most of you have figured out about me so far is that I am no fan of LARGE Government. For the most part they want to do good but so often go over the deep end. My judgement of government stems from not trusting them. People operate them and are subject to corruption, power mongering, and agenda-building on both sides. The judicial system is no savior, victims can't get justice anymore

Case in point: look no further than our backyard. Judge Lopez is being looked into for the handling of last year's, very ridiculous, four-year probation sentence to a child molester. There are accusations of fod's (friends of Judiciary) for trashing the victim's credibility to save the judiciary's ass. Where is the outrage?

People are so driven to their ridiculous feel-good causes that mean nothing. Everyone's whining about something. Pressuring government to act in areas where people make the difference, not government. When it comes down to real in-your-face issues, where are these clowns.

The mainstream press needs to dramatize news to sell papers and advertising airtime; that is frightening. It has lost all subjectivity. It doesn't question all government for corruption, just ones that are on opposite ideological spectrums. This is very dangerous. They harp on stupid issues and leave the real perspective muddled. Remember, it's about sex, not about lying in front of a grand jury. Media manipulation works. Ask the Russians.

Common sense has left politics; it's all ideology, it's ripping us apart. Ideology is so fierce it has reached our schools. Teachers, professors quelling differing points of view. Opposing views are ridiculed and violent action has taken place in some cases. Our culture thrives on orderly, opposing view debates. Has our fairness been bought?

-Sledgehammer



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pleased to release *Twisted Forever* on August 14th, a tribute album to the '80s metal group **Twisted Sister**. The album features many of today's hottest artists (ranging from **Lit** to **Nine Days**), rock icons in their own right (including **Sebastian Bach** and **Joan Jett**), masters of streetwise aggression (such as **Sevendust** and **Vision Of Disorder**), as well as leaders of underground extreme movements (like **Cradle Of Filth** and **Nashville Pussy**) - an unlikely motley crew of talent to be inspired by the same band! But as **Nine Days** vocalist **John Hampson** testifies: "Twisted Sister has actually been a part of my musical world since I was seven years old." Even **Public Enemy**'s notorious frontman **Chuck D** shows his respect: "Angst Anthem music Dee and the boys personify, and obviously some of that rebellion rubbed off on fellow Long Islanders **Public Enemy** in the game of rap." In honor of Twisted Sister's accomplishments, VH-1 is currently in production of a Twisted Sister "Behind The Music" special, slated to air in early August. The overwhelming demand for Twisted Sister merchandise and information recently spawned an official website, [www.TwistedSister.com](http://www.TwistedSister.com), which you can visit to see the complete list of artists on this CD; or go to [www.kochentertainment.com](http://www.kochentertainment.com) or [www.shootinggallery.com](http://www.shootinggallery.com).....

Fans of VH1's "Bands On The Run" make a note of this: **Flickerstick**, one of the bands featured on the "reality" program (and at press time one of two bands left in the competition) will be at the Middle East Downstairs on July 15 with the band **Loveless** in a show presented by Mass Concerts. Tickets are \$8.00 in advance, \$10.00 at the door, and are available through TicketMaster by calling (617) 931-2000 or (508) 931-2000 or online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Call (617) 864-EAST for more info. This is an 18\_ show.....

Speaking of band competitions, on a local level, **SuperZero** will be in band battle at the Hard Rock Cafe in Boston on July 12. The series is sponsored by Rolling Rock and the winner of the final round will go on to play at the Latrobe Fair opening for **Stone Temple Pilots**, **Staind**, **Live**, and more. For more on SuperZero go to [www.super0.com](http://www.super0.com)....

*Correction:*

On page 23 of the June 2001 issue of **Boston SoundCheck**, there was a live review of a **Coppertree** show at Bill's Bar in Boston. In that review it stated that their most recent release was recorded at **Sterling Sound** in New York City, when in fact it was recorded and mixed at **Mixed Emotions Music** in Middleton, MA and mastered at **Sterling Sound** in New York....

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**C60** July 6, **Tree** July 27

LIVE FROM THE LUMWOOD GRILLE, BOSTON, MA:  
**Glutton, Banter, Woody** July 7  
**Phil Dubnick (The Dubnicks)** July 11  
**Andrew King (The Control Group)** July 11  
**Dave Age (Favorite Atomic Hero)** July 11

LIVE FROM THE INN ON THE CLUES, FORD, ME  
**Cheryl Arena & the Ricky Russell Band** July 14

LIVE FROM THE BARRON PUB, SOMERVILLE, MA  
**Nate Borofsky** July 15, **Peter Mulvey** July 29

LIVE FROM THE ATTIC, NEWTON, MA  
**Hurricane Jane** July 26

LIVE FROM THE CHICKEN BOIL, NANTUCKET, MA  
**One People** July 28

LIVE FROM THE TIE IN NO. 1, SOMERVILLE, MA  
**Jimmy Ryan** August 1, **Ray Mason** August 4

## Channel 1 Special Events

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**Nate Borofsky** July 12  
**Echo Us** July 16  
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**The Mockingbirds** July 17  
**Hurricane Jane** July 23

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# CRACKTORCH

*By Jesse Mayer  
Photos by Kim Genereux*



## The People's Champion

*It wasn't pretty. The Middle East, packed with The Allston Rock City faithful on the night of the WBCN Rock 'n' Roll Rumble finals wasn't pretty. It was electrifying. CRACKTORCH had most definitely brought The Rock.*

*Lead throat and some-time (that night) Telecaster hooligan Marc Schliecher spent a good deal of the set 20 feet from the stage, upside down, feet in the ceiling pipes, head aloft by the heathens screaming as band mates Chris Jackson (guitar, vocals), Stacy Frick (bass, vocals), and drummer Nick Z. dug in and put on a pummelling rhythm and booze assault in a Jesus Lizard meets AC/DC style.*

*The set was relentless - by the end, Marc was crazed-looking like Dirk Diggler in the coke bender sequence of "Boogie Nights." Only much more unstable. The only thing these guys didn't do was win. Oh well, what was it they said about "hearts and minds" during the Vietnam War?*

*CRACKTORCH is more than a band; they are part of an extended family that includes Quintaine Americana, Liquor Tricks, and Coke Dealer (see sidebar), as well as Polterchrist and Curve Of The Earth Records.*

*I had a sit-down with Marc, Nick, Stacy, and Terrence Burke (of Liquor Tricks). Here's what they had to say:*



**Boston SoundCheck Magazine:** *Do you guys have any feelings one way or the other about the Rumble this year?*

**Nick:** Not really. It was fun to be in. I'd rather be the runner-up than the winner. It's better to be the runner-up that everyone thought should have won than the guy that won that nobody thought should have. Not that we should or we shouldn't have, it's just kind of funny. Seeing we're always the underdog, that's fine. I was proud of us. I just felt the competition was too funny 'cause what Bleu does and what we do is so completely different, so it's whatever the judges seem to want.

**BSM:** *Do you think about on a regular show how you base the set?*

**Mark:** Oh yeah. We just pull it out, open up the gate and go, that's how it should be. CRACKTORCH, our whole rule is that we don't play over 30 minutes, at least to 25.

**BSM:** *Even AC/DC can bore me after long enough.*

**Mark:** Right. Even the greatest band in the world after they play for more than 60 minutes it's like O.K. come on. So it's always at the end of the show they'll be saying, "Do one more, do one more," and we don't. Makes us want to go back.

**BSM:** *Better to leave them wanting more. I don't remember whether you said you guys do segue songs, don't you?*

**Mark:** Oh yeah.

**BSM:** *Not to sound too "old bastard rock" but it drives me crazy that bands don't do that. The only band that doesn't segue and gets away with it is AC/DC. Every song's the same, they go to the back line, and it looks like they're talking about what they're going to do next.*

**Mark:** I think they do 'cause when I saw AC/DC it totally looked like they're were like group-up, huddle, and they'd all go over and then look over to the key grip who'd hit the bell.

**BSM:** *Maybe they have it worked out with the pyro like that, "O.K., bring out the cannons - no wait a minute, hold the cannons, we're doing one more."*

**Stacy:** Yeah, they don't seem to have a set list, at least it looked like that to me. They would do a



couple in a row and then be like hmmm. There are a lot of bands that don't have a set list. It's probably less of a percentage 'cause most bands do, but there are still bands that don't. We usually write ours during the band that goes on right before us at the bar. We just get the vibe from the audience and then figure it out on a napkin.

**BSM:** *So it's something that you guys don't sit and rehearse and say this is our 35-minute set?*

**Marc:** No, though it can become that way because we have combinations that we like.

**BSM:** *Do you guys see yourselves as a blues band?*

**Stacy:** No. Never thought of it.

**BSM:** *Really?*

**Nick:** We think more of a classic rock bar style. I describe CRACKTORCH like indie rock and AC/DC.

**BSM:** *But AC/DC is blues, to me.*

**Marc:** Yeah, well they are. Led Zeppelin is more of a blues band to me. The riffs are like the blues pentatonic, I just usually didn't think of the blues. Though I guess if you go back through rock 'n' roll that starts as a blues.

**BSM:** Zen Guerilla is a prime example of what I'm talking about.

**Nick:** Yeah. Those guys are awesome.

**BSM:** *I hear you guys right up with them.*

*They're a little more classically blues then you are, but still.*

**Nick:** We base a lot of stuff on the blues putting the beat or something like that and do those riffs. But yeah, Zen Guerilla, I'm really into them and they definitely have a lot more of the bluesy soul kind of vibe.

**BSM:** *That'd be a good band for you guys to tour with.*

**Marc:** Yeah, if you know those guys call them up, we'd definitely get on the road with them.

**BSM:** *You guys remind me a little bit of Jesus Lizard too, live. That Middle East final show was very Jesus Lizard.*

**Stacy:** That was fun.

**BSM:** *That must have been fun hanging upside down.*

**Marc:** My amp went out me and what are you going to do, you know, it's like a good thing you got two guitar players in the band 'cause I won't be playing guitar the rest of the set.

**BSM:** *You improvised, you kicked. Where'd the "I can kick really high" routine come from?*

**Marc:** Crispin Glover on the David Letterman show. He came out saying, "I've been practicing karate." He came out kicking really high. Just anyone who can do that on live television deserves a song about him.

**BSM:** *What's the best Crispin Glover film?*

**Marc:** *River's Edge* is good. He's insane, but he definitely leaves an impression on all the movies he does.

**BSM:** *What's the worst song you've ever heard?*

**Terrence:** Rock 101 was playing the "Best of the '80s" all the way down the glam era. The Cumberland Farms ad, that makes me want to go into a Cumberland Farms and fire bomb them. The only people I don't understand are people who don't like any music. I love people who have turned me onto N'Sync and Britney Spears. I love that shit. I used to hate them, but then I slowly got over it all and now I can appreciate the pop crap, it's songwriting you know. In the scheme of world history. I even like the jingles. I love that live medley that Barry Manilow does of all the jingles he did in the '70s, got the Allstate and the Band-Aid and the Coca-Cola and the McDonalds all in this big montage, it's amazing,

it's just brilliantly retarded.

**BSM:** *What's the movie sample at the very beginning of the Liquor Tricks CD? Sounds like Lee Marvin.*

**Terrence:** That is actually slowed down Gene Wilder and Cleavon Little from *Blazing Saddles*. Gene Wilder is the washed-up Waco Kid with the fastest hand in the West and now he's all washed up.

**BSM:** *It sounds much eviler slowed down.*

**Terrence:** Why exactly, and it's hard to copyright.

**BSM:** *You know what's a fun thing to do, if you're in the studio and you're really bored go sing the "Mister Ed" theme song and then flip the tape upside down and play it and listen to Satanic messages in your own singing. "A horse is a horse, of course of course," backwards really does sound like "someone sang this song for Satan."*

**Terrence:** Really...

**BSM:** *But at 3 o'clock in the morning anytime you put the tape upside down it gives you the creeps anyways. Speaking of which where does the evil power of the rock originate?*

**Marc:** I talked to a friend of mine not too long ago about that, that there was always this mystery in the '60s and '70s of like Led Zeppelin selling their souls to the devil, except for John Paul Jones who didn't. I love that mystery. There are no bands that have that air of mystery around them. Even the bands that try to do the black metal end up looking like they got rejected from the KISS army. Even trying to be as evil as they are they come of more clownish.

**BSM:** *Do you believe Jerry Lee Lewis is human?*

**Marc:** No, Jerry Lee Lewis is from somewhere else. Jimi Hendrix is from somewhere else. They're untouchable. Jim Morrison. Even Little Richard, where'd that guy come from?

**BSM:** *Especially Little Richard.*

**Nick:** Even if you think about Michael Jackson, even though he's not really rock 'n' roll, but where'd that guy come from? He looks like someone abducted him and turned him into something. Jerry Lee Lewis though he's not from here.

**BSM:** *What's more important booze or volume?*

**Marc:** I would have to go with booze. I don't know what that question means. It's relevant to the situation. More booze helps you with more volume. If it's loud, like really loud, you can experience it without booze.

**BSM:** *The whole Allston Rock City scene and all the bands that you guys are involved with it all has a pretty cohesive sound and vibe to it. I believe it's a product of incest, if so what are the dangers of inbreeding?*

**Nick:** Most of the bands that are like the Rock City Crime Wave, CRACKTORCH, or Milligram, whenever we do side things with each other, a lot of people ended up being in Coke Dealer at one point or another and Coke Dealer is a good rock



## "Boy, You Sure Got A Purty Mouth"...Marc Schleicher's Family Values:

*Thanks to Alvan Long at Curve Of The Earth Records for his Alex Haley-like research of a family more imbred than the state of West Virginia.*

### CRACKTORCH

**Marc Schleicher** - Guitar and vocals  
Chris Jackson - Guitar and vocals  
Stacy Fick - Bass and vocals  
Nick Z. - Drums

Rumble runner-up out of nowhere?! The band actually released a split full-length in 1998 but no one was prepared for the stage presence and the rock attack that developed.

### QUINTAINE AMERICANA

Robert Charles Dixon - Guitar and vocals  
**Marc Schleicher** - Bass and vocals  
Jason King - drums

Marc's longest running and most well known band with albums on CherryDisc and RoadRunner, and an EP, *The Devil Went Down To Miss* on Curve Of The Earth Records. Currently shopping new material produced by Mudrock.

### LIQUOR TRICKS

Terence Burke - Vocals and effects  
**Marc Schleicher** - Guitar  
Glenn Smith - Keys, guitar, and vocals  
Kate McLaughlin - Bass and vocals  
Nick Z. - Drums and noise

Wanting to play with good buddy Kate, Marc turned to long-time partner Nick Z who brought in Glenn and Terrence, forging a tough Chicago-influenced sound.

### COKE DEALER

**Marc Schleicher** - (Harlem Greenwood) - Words  
Nick Z. - (Stu Walker) - Music

Auxiliary members include, Darryl Sheppard, Todd Demma, Gordon Smith, Jonah Jenkins, Kevin Flansburg, Zephan, Jeff, Andrew Schneider

Experimental and melodic in the studio, confrontational, abrasive, and just dangerous live.





band it just becomes this crazy stage performance. I don't think there is a danger of incest of all the bands sounding alike. All the bands seem to sound different to me. We're all friends and we've been playing together.

**BSM:** *I think it's a really cool thing. Kind of what I was after was that motor punk kind of thing that happens in lower Allston Rock City, which isn't really different than a Mercy Beat kind of sound or the sound of Detroit rock bands in the mid '70s, which is all good, and it just sort of happened. How do you think it wound up like that, that everybody in Allston all of a sudden came out with that kind of pissed-off and sometimes out-of-tune, really good Motorpunk thing?*

**Nick:** A lot of the people are the same, the same age, we listen to all the same music, too.

**BSM:** *You guys are all really busy you all do a lot of stuff. What I wanted to know is how do you all find the balance between different projects, working a day job, paying your bills, and not losing your mind?*

**Marc:** We're on the line right now I don't know how to tell ya. It's always put the music and wanted to play in a band first, like doing CRACKTORCH and Quintaine and Liquor Tricks and Coke Dealer it's always so many different personalities in each band. It's also the more you put into doing bands and stuff the less time you have to spend being at the bar drinking - that's what I found. Might as well get the most out of it for yourself if you're happy doing what you're doing.

**BSM:** *For each of you, what is your working definition of success?*

**Marc:** Being happy. Being content and happy and having a tangible product. Not wanting to be dead.

**BSM:** *You guys all seemed to have tight relationships with other people in the community and there's a real sense of comradeship that's really nice. It think that it's really cool. Boston used to be like that, much more. You don't really see that much anymore.*

**Stacy:** Every night at the Rumble the first half of the crowd was all of our rocker friends. It was fun to put on a rock show and have people enjoy that.

**BSM:** *Rock shows should always be sort of an event. Scissorfight is an event everytime I see them.*

**Terrence:** Even if it's a breakdown, a delusion of show business all of show business is the business of the show and showing people. Got to entertain. With some people it's more performance acts and with some people it's more lecture.





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*I am the docta! I'm here to rock ya! Won't stop ya! Kickin' out the jams and the advice to ya!*

Dear Dr. Rock,

I went to the Ozzfest 2000. It was amazing. Godsmack played. They were magnificent. When Sully started singing, "I'm not the one that's so far away?!" Man, I nearly cried. Anyway, Dr. Rock, my question is, well... My girlfriend and I tried going backstage to congratulate the band on a job well done. We found a bunch of tour buses, and decided to split up, thinking that if we went separately, one of us would find the band quicker, and then one would get the other. Well... she never came back and I haven't seen my girlfriend since last year's Ozzfest. What do I do?

*Hopelessly Metal,  
Davey*



Dear Hopelessly Metal Davey,

The Ozzfest is a wonderful time and place; a small pocket of time where one can waste \$127 in a matter of nine hours. There are a few things that could happen to your girlfriend:

1. Your girlfriend probably finds the Godsmack tour bus, knocks on the door, and is violently pulled in by a sex-crazed Sully. He gets the tour bus started, and whisks her off to a remote rural location in the Salem, Massachusetts State Forest. There, Sully lights plenty of candles and ties your girlfriend to a tree with barbed wire. He calls up the local witch, and the two take sick photographs of your girlfriend for the inside cover art of the third Godsmack full-length.

2. Sully opens the door of the tour bus. The mere sight of your young and luscious girlfriend enralls Sully to the point where he truly believes he sees an angel and falls in love with her. Your girlfriend has a similar reaction. She walks onto the bus and the two have meaningful conversations about how being an Alice and Chains cover band is a recipe for success. Your girlfriend feels that Sully is the first person that is really in touch with her feelings. Sully continues to see your girlfriend and she goes on the road with the band for the rest of the year. You'll return to the 2001 Ozzfest this summer and run into your girlfriend. She will have changed, giving up stone washed jeans and Iron Maiden T-shirts for slutty leather pants and halter tops. She'll have transformed into one of the Godsmack chix!

3. Your girlfriend actually never finds the Godsmack tour bus and never gets to meet Sully. Actually she runs into a stumbling drunk Ozzy Osbourne who makes a mistake and insists that your girlfriend is his daughter Ammie. Ozzy scolds your girlfriend for running off without telling her parents where she's going. The Ozz-man drags your girlfriend back to his bus where Sharon (Ozzy's wife) takes in your girlfriend as one of her own children. Now your girlfriend resides at Ozzy's mansion in Beverly Hills taking in the finer things in life rather than sharing that one-room apartment with you in Billerica!

At any rate, my advice is to start a nu-metal band, perhaps with a twinge of hip-hop the side. You can write songs about your long-lost girl like, "Bitch got the rock and I didn't" and "I learned it by watching you, it's all your fault, now I want to die, and by the way... fuck you." Hopefully your nu-metal band will make it to the 2001 Ozzfest where you can reunite with your girlfriend or at least try to scoop on the "chix" in the Kittie bus.

**No matter what your rock problem, the good doctor can set you straight. E-mail Docta Rock with your questions to [doctarock@bostonsoundcheck.com](mailto:doctarock@bostonsoundcheck.com).**

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF Y

I am a firm believer that when it comes to the topic of image, the most important person you should be is yourself - any kind of portrayal beyond that is just plain phony and phoniness will inevitably rear its ugly, transparent head at some point or another.

That said, it is important to clarify what image is and how it is, in fact, important when pursuing your musical career. With the thousands and thousands of bands across the nation all, for the most part, working diligently towards getting signed, getting press, and getting tours, etc., your overall package must clearly and uniquely identify and distinguish you from the others. This identity is your image.

How is this accomplished? First of all, make sure you and your bandmates are on the same wavelength musically. This may sound very basic and obvious, but I have heard many stories of musicians not working out within a band because for whatever reason their idea of the genre of music and the ideas of others do not gel. Not only does this waste time and cause distress within a band, but it often-times results in an awkward physical image of a band. How many times have you seen, for example, a band on stage with one member in fatigues, another with a jacket and T-shirt, and maybe another in a baseball cap and jeans? Not only does it look uncoordinated, but it gives people the impression that this band just isn't together. Yes, it is the music that matters, but if your goal is to do this for a living, tour the world, be interviewed on MTV, etc., then you have to deal with the fact that you are in the public eye and therefore (unfortunately) are going to be judged. When playing in local clubs, audiences are not only enjoying and absorbing your music, but they are also looking at you, forming a perception based on what they see. If you come across incohesively, you are leaving a mixed message of what you are about and consequently leaving a weak mark in the minds of your audience members.

This leads to another important part of image - stage presence. For all the reasons mentioned above, you must polish up your stage presence. Connect with the audience - a disconnected, cold presence makes people feel uncomfortable and, once again, leaves them with nothing. They're there to see YOU and hear YOUR music - give them something to remember. Talk to them a little bit here and there in between, make eye contact, interact with each other, tell them about the next song, who you are (keep reminding them of this, by the way), where you're playing next, your website address, etc. If you are the front person and are uncomfortable talking then don't force yourself or that uneasiness will show; instead, have someone else in the band intro the song or make chit-chat. You never know who is going to be in the audience - whether there are three people or 300 people give it your all - there could be a reviewer from the press there, a college DJ, a lawyer, or even a friend or relative of "Somebody Important" who could go back and tell Mr./Ms. Important what a cool/terrible band they just saw. You just don't know. Why slack off? Every gig, even if it's to an empty room, is an opportunity to tighten your shows and your songs. Take advantage of it and at the same time you could be impressing the right people.

Besides clothing and stage presence, another aspect of image that you should pay particular attention to are promo photos, which photographer Janet Caliri covered in more detail last month. In a nutshell: remember that your promo photo should capture the essence of what you are about. Once again, a record company exec who is looking at your press kit is going to form some sort of opinion based on that photo - or at least put you into some musical category in his/her mind before even hearing the music. Also, don't forget to put your name, address, website, and phone number on the photo; and when doing a photo shoot you should have the photographer shoot color, if you can afford it, along with black and white, but you don't have to mass produce your color photos at this stage of the game. Reproduce black and white in bulk first - it's less expensive and reproduces better in newsprint. If you score a great magazine or web feature story and the editors request a color shot, you can go back and have slides/transparencies made from your original color shoot or even have a color shot scanned onto a disk. Not only that, but you'll have a different shot than your black and white promo that at this point has already made the rounds everywhere.

Other important things that reflect your image are your: bio, logo, press kit, and CD artwork. Below are brief explanations as to why these aspects reflect your image all of which can be expanded upon in future articles:

When a press person or record label exec. opens up your press kit, the first thing they are going to do - either before listening to your music or while listening to your music - is look at your photo and immediately formulate some sort of opinion as to your style; they are then going to read your biog-

# YOUR IMAGE

raphy. The purpose of the bio is to in one page (usually) capture the essence of what the band is about while at the same time serve as means of background information, current accomplishments, and future plans. The hook of the image lies in the description of the music and the style of the writing. If, for example, your group's angle is you don't take yourselves seriously, then the bio could have a comedic twist; earthy, acoustic, the bio would most likely be unembellished, though still strong word-wise; raw, metal-ish, then a colorfully worded bio would keep things consistent. You get the idea. Karl Russo will cover bios further in next month's issue.

The looks of the logo, press kit, and CD/cassette artwork definitely creates a visual perception to someone on the outside. Perhaps this sounds like stating the obvious, but sometimes the obvious needs to be reinforced. Be careful and take your time when putting the entire package together - make sure that everything is consistent with each other. If you're not sure what your logo or artwork reflects image-wise then get the advice of a publicist or manager and also absolutely run it by friends and family - look for their reactions and ask for and expect complete honesty. As there is a strong possibility of dissension within a band what the image is, or should be, enlisting the strong, trusted opinion of someone on the "outside" is highly recommended. You have done a great deal of work already at this point in time in creating the music and keeping that consistent and solid, don't blow it now due to hastiness or member disagreement.

Lastly (actually it should be firstly!) think of public perception when choosing your band name. Often, I am sure, you have heard a band's name and subconsciously guessed what type of music that artist played. Sounds like a minor point, but in the long run it could make a difference; for example, Stone Temple Pilots sounds like a rock band on the hard side, when you hear the name Stained you most likely do NOT conjure up an acoustic/folk duo, and so on.

Remember, image not only reflects on you, but towards others. It goes without saying that the music is what this is all about, but your music can be a focal point for the other senses as well - use that to your advantage, it will only enhance and draw attention to what is really there and then the songs will speak for themselves.

- Debbie Catalano



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# THE BOUNCING SOULS

*By Duncan Wilder Johnson*

A couple of years ago I was dining at The Centre Street Cafe in Jamaica Plain, MA and on my way out, this fairly pretty blonde, yuppie-looking woman stopped me. “Hey!” she shouted, rising up from her chair like some long-lost aunt or cousin with wide-eyed excitement, “You have a Bouncing Souls’ patch on your backpack!” “Yeah?” I returned, slightly confused that this very straight looking woman knew who The Bouncing Souls were.

“I went to high school with those guys!” “Oh cool!? Uh... Tell them I really like their music?” “Yeah, awesome!” she said, sitting back down to eat her dinner. “That was weird,” I thought.

The Bouncing Souls play a positive brand of punk rock, with songs about lost love, nostalgia, longing, and a celebration of youth and individuality. Listening to a Bouncing Souls record feels like looking at the yearbook of your life; being with best friends, having your heart broken, and going to the always therapeutic, all-ages hardcore/punk show. Anthemic and fun, The Souls have been playing their asses off, and putting out records at an unstoppable rate. *How I Spent My Summer Vacation*, their newest work, is a testimony to favorite songs, best friends, old loves, and of course BMX bikes.

The Bouncing Souls consist of Pete on guitar, Brian on bass, Michael on drums, and Greg on lead vocals. I had a chance to chat with Greg over the phone.

**Boston SoundCheck Magazine:** *How did the band get started?*

**Greg:** We went to high school together and were friends, just hanging out and drinking beer and going to parties. Pete and Brian played bass and guitar with another drummer and they would play Ramones songs and Clash songs and I would just come over and hang out and sometimes I would sing whatever songs I knew. I guess it just slowly evolved from there. We grew up in Basking Ridge, NJ, then we moved out to a house in New Brunswick, NJ and we started getting shows. We were gigging and experimenting and no one really liked us, but we just kept playing. A couple of us got jobs. A couple of us went to school for a few years, and we kinda developed a following. We were also known for the

parties we would throw at our house. Now, Pete and Brian live in New York and our new drummer, Michael lives near Philly and I just moved to California about a year ago.

**BSM:** *Tell me about your new record.*

**Greg:** Over the summer, Pete and Brian wrote a bunch of songs and I wrote a few songs and then we got together towards the end of the summer and sort of made it all make sense and finished the songs off. Personally, I think it's another step in searching for who I am. That's what writing songs is for me. As far as the sound and the production of it, I like it a lot because we spent a lot of time on the details. Pete, Brian, and John Seymore pretty much did all the production on it. We know what we want from doing all the other records and we kind of know what we're good at. I think the feeling of the Bouncing Souls comes across best on this record. At least overall, more consistently, compared to the other ones.

**BSM:** *As in all the Bouncing Souls records there is a feeling of nostalgia and truth and a connection that most people feel, like listening to a song in your room alone and finding music that totally touches you, which is what your song "That Song" is about.*

**Greg:** Yeah, I think when I was a teenager and listening to Bruce Springsteen, somehow I felt totally included in what was going on. This song came on and I was right there in it. There was nothing separating me from it as a person, so I really feel like that was the most important thing for me when I became a musician and started playing in a band... Aside from all the other bullshit that comes across - money?... You don't make money?... You get kinda famous or you don't get kinda famous, but I know that if I could understand that for myself and be able to express that to people, then I know that I was being successful because I would know I had done something that made me feel good. It still does. It's something that is constantly a challenge I guess.

**BSM:** *Are excited to play the Warped Tour?*

**Greg:** Yeah, it should be great.

**BSM:** *Who are you looking forward to seeing?*

**Greg:** It's gonna be fun to see The Living End; they're great. There's a bunch of new bands. I'm always excited to check out new bands. Pennywise is always great.

**BSM:** *You mentioned Bruce Springsteen, Who else do you listen to?*

**Greg:** I always loved great singers like Stevie Wonder, but as far as the punk side of things, X and The Replacements. Lately, I've just been checking out great singers, people who have their own character and no matter what; if you hear Frank Sinatra, you know it's Frank Sinatra. Ella Fitzgerald and all those great great singers. They really pull you in.

**BSM:** *What do you guys like to do besides ride BMX bikes and rock?*

**Greg:** I do some surfing when I can. I play golf with my old man whenever I can. I'm messin' around with video right now. Editing video. I'm working on all the old Bouncing Souls tour footage and some funny skits that we did. I've been working on it a long time. I'll hopefully put it all together into something eventually. I've always had a video camera on tour and I've always wanted to do something with the video footage that I have. My sister has been doing it for part of her job, so I kinda got into it with her as she got into it.

**BSM:** *People call you guys punk. Do you consider yourself a punk band?*

**Greg:** I guess, you have to call yourself something. People want you to so they can have an understanding of what you are. To me, The Ramones were a '50s rock band just revved up even more, you know? They're punk rock and so is The Exploited and X. All those bands have their own specific character, like Frank Sinatra! You turn on X, and you know it's X. You turn on The Ramones, and there's no doubt that it's The Ramones and so many bands have tried to sound like them, but they still don't achieve it, that originality that The Ramones have. So, to me punk rock style is being able to express that in some way - whoever you are. Pennywise, they are their own band. They have their own style and they've stuck to it and that's what they do. No one can ever touch that because that's who they are, you know? The same goes for us and once you are that... I don't know, it kind of develops into that, as people and as a band. Plugging it into the words "punk rock," because it's a band, I think that works. An attitude comes from it. The Ramones just have an attitude and it's a sort of confidence. Punk rock also has a very negative aspect of it. All those very critical and political bands - I mean The Dead Kennedy's were really cool but it just wasn't what worked for us. Expressing myself and what I know to be the truth was always the most important thing in my perception of punk rock. It might not be anyone else's, but that's what mine was.

**BSM:** *Anything else for the record?*

**Greg:** Remember, life isn't serious, people just think it is.







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# THE HIGH CEILINGS

by Ma-c

They may not have won the coveted "Rumble" ring, but they don't need success handed to them. Our Boston Boyees, The High Ceilings are still rockin' strong. It's what they like to do and it's what they do best.

**Boston SoundCheck Magazine:** *When you're driving, taking the T, whatever your mode is, what are you listening to?*

**Max:** Local music.

**Chris:** As the only member that owns a car capable of playing music, I am forced to listen to whatever these guys put in... gotta keep my hands on the wheel, you know. I listen mostly to hard rock like Swervedriver, Tool, Soundgarden, A Perfect Circle, and Alice in Chains. I also really enjoy the new Ours CD, as well as Coldplay's disc. I also spend a bit of time listening to local bands like Say Hi to Lisa, The Sheila Divine, Francine, and Quick Fix... when I'm in that mood.

**Brian:** I've reached the point where I can't even bring discs into work anymore. I can go from Sonny Rollins to the Replacements to Otis Redding to Carl Perkins to Bjork on a dime, and it's a pain in the ass to plan for all of those whims. I listen to everything.

**John:** Before my CD changer was stolen... with my truck: Neil Young (without the horse), Grant Lee Buffalo, Tool, The Rolling Stones, Nick Drake, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Hendrix, and Sunny Day Real Estate.

**BSM:** *What do you consider your music to be? (No buzzwords allowed) Also, Arrested Development once said their music comes from the dirt. Where does your music come from?*

**Chris:** Our music does not come up from the dirt. I'm not sure where it comes from; I'm just glad that we're there when it does.

**Max:** The band's music is what you get when you put the four of us in a room and plug in - my contribution is a moody, wavering confidence.

**Brian:** Hmmm... I would say that it's an honest synthesis of our individual and collective influences.

**John:** I consider our music to be the byproduct of four guys who share a mutual respect for a handful of artists/groups and who happen to hang out, coincidentally, in a room full of instruments. The music definitely comes from the gut.

**BSM:** *When you were kids, what did you want to be when you grew up? Are you anywhere near where you thought you'd be?*

**Max:** I wanted to be a basketball player... but then I stopped growing. I wanted to be a poet, and this is as close as I can currently get.

**John:** I wanted to be a professional skier... I live and work in Boston. That about answers it.

**Chris:** The first career I wanted was to be a mover. My parents thought I meant Real Estate. Nope, I wanted to be big and strong, like the guys that loaded the trucks. Currently I load guitars and amplifiers into trucks. I'm right where I want to be.

**Brian:** Ah, Americana. I wanted to replace Yaz in left field for the Sox, AND I wanted to play guitar in a band... still waiting, on both counts!

**BSM:** *Who are your heroes?*

**Brian:** How much time ya got? Actually I have a ton of influences from all walks of life, but here is a bit of a grandiose term...

**John:** My friends and my family. Musically, Neil Young.

**Max:** My heroes? W.S. Merwin (a poet), Magic Johnson, and Sinead O'Connor.

**Chris:** Every band that has ever played a convincing set to an empty club while on the road. Also, Adam Franklin, Kim Thayil, Billy Corgan, and the little engine that could.

**BSM:** *What's your favorite thing about your music? What makes you stand out above the other groups trying for the brass ring?*

**Chris:** It's ours.

**John:** When a song comes together for the first time, the intensity is awesome. If the song hits the listener with the same intensity, whether live, or recorded, I think we'll have accomplished something huge.

**Max:** My favorite thing is the pleasure I get from making it. From working on songs, loading gear, doing soundcheck, buying picks... the whole thing is satisfying. If anything sets us apart, it's that we sound like ourselves. Whether or not it's a good thing is subjective. I like to think the songs I write are damn good (the lyrics), but as Auden says about bad writing, everyone likes to smell their own farts.

**Brian:** I love the fact that there's an obvious level of technical skill existent within the band, yet those chops take a back seat to the songs. I love that we're able to be sonically experimental and still rock, AND still be sensitive. I don't think that there's any one attribute that sets us apart, but somehow the whole package that is the High Ceilings does set us apart.

**BSM:** *What's more important the music or the money?*

**Chris:** If I could pay rent and buy food without keeping a day job, I'd be happy. I'd rather be remembered as a great musician than a rich person.

**Brian:** It's funny, I had a similar conversation with Robert Fisher [Willard Grant Conspiracy] recently and he said, "I've never been more broke, but I've never been happier." We're certainly a nonsolvent enterprise, and I've never had a dime to my name. Two years ago, I was just starving; now I'm a starving musician and my life is way better for it.

**John:** The music is definitely more important... although some money would be nice too. (Maybe just enough to make another recording?!)

**BSM:** *What is your opinion on the state of music today? Are you afraid for the future? Do you think you've succeeded in rising above the mediocre standards set for today's climbing musical acts?*

**Max:** Music today is varied - I like a lot of it - I listen to the radio with the students I teach (my day job) and don't get the sense that things have changed that much. There's still fad-driven pop, but there are as many creative people writing music as ever, and as genres merge, tastes become more open to diversity because of the diversity, both ethnically and musically of today's artists.

**Chris:** We have not succeeded in rising above the mediocre standards of today's top acts. We don't have matching clothes or curvy figures. We certainly don't have the dance choreography that is apparently necessary to be considered for radio play.

**Brian:** I'm never afraid of the future as long as there are bands that exist for the sake of art over commerce. Look at the '80s, bands like The Mats and Husker Du were barely noticed by the mainstream standards that exist; we set our own standards by writing good songs and let people find their way to us.

**John:** I'm definitely not afraid for the future of music... as long as there is a waiting list for rehearsal spaces and clubs booking mid-week gigs.



**Stocklan** - *Middle East*, Cambridge, MA - 05/31/01

As soon Stocklan walked on the stage, you knew what was about to happen was going to be a kick-ass. Opening up with "Carpal Tunnel," this trio came right out of the gate hard and heavy. Levels were good, Oz's six-string bass was cutting right through. Greg Stocklan's "Paul" was rude and lewd, as Andrew Stocklan pounded the "R" out of the Remo drum heads and the glitter right out his compact but heavy sounding drum kit. The band went into to "Shomar" with a great bass intro and chorus. As Greg Stocklan, belted out the chorus "He's got a license to kill!" the band was now in the "zone." At this point all eyes and ears of the packed house were now focused on the band. Definitely a good crowd for a Thursday night. They ripped through the next two tunes with an awesome six-string bass intro on "Pigs Can't Fly," and a nice classical intro on "Stinks Like Bitch" as well. Stocklan then proceeded to ramrod their set down the throats of the entire Middle East crowd. At one point my attention span shifted when I thought I heard that Miss Alicia Klass was in the house. If you don't know who she is, check out Stocklan's CD *Pineapple*. Taking a quick second to talk about their soon-to-be-released CD "Shameless," Greg also mentioned that Miss Stephanie Swift would be modeling for the cover. Man, I gotta hang out with these guys. Stocklan ended their set with a big bang, playing a phat song with this outro that made you feel like you were about to be slammed by a pissed-off raging lunatic of a bull. Alright, I missed 77s third-period laser, but I didn't miss a great show from Stocklan.

- R. Papa, Jr.

**Atomic 13** - *Middle East*, Cambridge, MA - 05/31/01

I had heard about Atomic 13 through a friend a mine so I thought I should see what was up. Let me make one thing perfectly clear I was not disappointed. Mixing a blend of progressive rock and a pinch of that early '90s "Seattle sound," Atomic 13 was all business tonight. This trio of mad dogs left no one standing as they attacked the crowd with sampled sounds mixed with explosive music. On lead guitar and mad screams, a man known as "DNA," on the bass and background screams "SCG," and on the kit, and backing vocals "TAS." Atomic 13 jammed for about an hour only stopping once or twice to come up for air and the crowd loved every minute of it. I was definitely impressed with the overall performance and the way these dudes worked together as a group. I could see the tightness of the group as well, like a well-oiled machine, each gear working off one another to make the clock tick. If you think you have enough balls, go check out Atomic 13.

- R. Papa Jr.

(For the complete review of the 05/31/01 Middle East show go to [www.bostoncheck.com](http://www.bostoncheck.com))

**Cosmic Rescue Plan** - *The Tank*, Revere, MA - 5/18/01

In a night laden with ear-splitting metal bands, it was a relief and a privilege to hear Cosmic Rescue Plan, as they delivered a powerful set of Zeppelin-influenced rock. Taking full command of the stage with their non-stop stage presence, the foursome opened the set with a brand new song, entitled, "Demons Down." This riff-rockin' catchy tune got the nearly packed Tank Lounge fired up for what was to come. Delving into their self-titled, full-length CD, CRP performed "The Spider Song" as their following selection and then into "Leeches," a song from their upcoming full-length. CRP is one of those bands in which each member contributes equally to the music with infectious riffs that carry the tracks from guitarists Doug Bathchelder and Colin O'Brien, Robert Plant-

like vocals also from Bathchelder, and a tight rhythm section consisting of bassist Pete Kalmansson, and drummer Phil Cefalo. After a few more selections from the current disc, CRP ended the set with another new song called "Sun Don't Shine," in which rippin' trade-off guitar solos were performed that seemed to last forever. Every multiple band bill has a highlight of the night, and with their great song writing, that is true to the style of rock 'n' roll, CRP was just that and more.

- Karl Russo

**Ben Lee** - *T.T. The Bear's*, Cambridge, MA - 6/20/01

Forgive the cliché, but... it was a dark and stormy night. As Boston was temporarily turned into a city-wide aquarium, and as the heavens outside mocked all who attempted to escape the remnants of

---

a tropical storm, there were those hardy souls out who threw all caution to the wind and decided, "Screw the monsoon. I want to go out and hear some good music!"

As the battered, tattered masses huddled in the small confines of T.T. the Bear's, they were afforded the chance to dry off and have their wish come true, as Hilken Mancini from Fuzzy and Chris Toppin from Buffalo Tom teamed up for a little acoustic duet. The songs were soft, slow, melodic, and hit the spot with the enthusiastic crowd. As the set came towards the end, Mancini said, "We're about to finish up, and then Ben Lee will come on. I can't wait to hear his accent!"

The man of the hour, Ben Lee, the guitarist extraordinaire from Down Under, was not long in coming. Hitting the stage about 15 minutes after Toppin's and Mancini's well-received set, the frazzle-haired Lee pulled out an electric guitar, introduced himself, remarked on how hot it was inside the club, and proceeded to play a couple of his early songs. Lee's songs all had a melodic, alternative rock sound to them (not surprising, as he has been hanging around with such alternative names as Evan Dando and Juliana Hatfield), and he had the crowd singing along to songs such as "Pop Queen," "Song 4 You," and "War Goes On." Lee's good humor was evident throughout the evening, as he passed out name tags, "So we can all get to know each other, make it nice and cozy," and then would call out people's names during the songs, asking if they were enjoying themselves. Lee played a full 10 songs alone with his guitar, and then introduced a bassist, and, along with a drum machine, he rocked out for the remaining six or seven songs. The choice of using a drum machine was interesting—the drums definitely beefed up the sound a bit, although a real drummer certainly would have been preferable. At one point, Lee invited a fan onstage to air drum, ending the song by giving her a big hug. In the end, it was a successful, low-key show for Lee, who must have felt good knowing that his Boston fan base is still quite healthy. It would be nice, however, if his next date featured a full band.

- Neal Alpert

#### **Jason Hatfield, Juliana Hatfield - Lilli's, Somerville, MA - 6/23/01**

Massachusetts has its very own Gram Parsons. Jason Hatfield, who has been making a connection with just about every notable musician in the greater Boston area for the past few years, came to Lilli's armed with just a guitar player, a back-up vocalist, and some killer alt-country songs. Sadly, Hatfield was competing with the crowd's boisterous conversation for most of his set. It is interesting that people who go to the movies and talk all the way through are practically branded with a scarlet letter by the rest of the audience, but it seems to be perfectly acceptable to talk all the way through a music act. While large pockets of the crowd at Lilli's were busy talking up a storm, Hatfield was up on stage, proving that he is a songwriter to be reckoned with. His stripped down band included a powerful slide guitarist, a female back-up vocalist armed with a tambourine, and himself on electric guitar; together, the trio produced classy, melodic country songs such as "Speechless," "She's Gone Missing," and "I'm Going Crazy." Various songs had jangly, Bryds-like guitar figures running through them, and the harmony between Hatfield (who does not have the strongest singing voice, but managed to carry it off here) and his back-up singer was downright intense. Hatfield played several songs from his latest album, *Songs For Betty*, as well as a few new songs, one of which sounded like it came straight off Dylan's last offering, complete with a harmonica riff for the chorus. It is a shame that more people weren't paying attention, although Hatfield, who remained in high spirits on stage, must be used to being overlooked by now, as almost every mention he gets in the press is preceded by "...younger brother of Juliana."

Juliana was, in fact, on the same bill, and she performed a similar set to her Fort Apache show back in April. Once again backed by keyboardist Peter Adams, who has been busy helping out on Kay Hanley's latest record, the elder Hatfield mixed in a greater amount of new material, mostly soft, melodic ballads that received a good reception from the crowd. The siblings gain points by playing against expectations and not performing a duet on stage. In the end, the message was clear, though: people who appreciate solid, well-crafted alt-country music should keep their eyes out for Jason Hatfield's future club appearances. If those next shows are anything like this night's was, it will definitely be worthwhile.

- Neal Alpert

***Go to [www.bostonsoundcheck.com](http://www.bostonsoundcheck.com) for more in-depth reviews and photos; including the June 9, 2001 U2 show and the June 11, 2001 Eric Clapton show, both of whom performed at the Fleet Center in Boston.***

# T★HOUSE of the A

So they've been on WAAF, WBCN, and WFNX, they played Locobazooka 2000, they have their own hotline (1-508-8THOUSE), all the DJs in Boston are raving about them, and their fan-base is growing by leaps and bounds. They must be jerks, right? No way! I recently chatted with J.J., vocalist for T\*House of the Almighty, and the band is four of the most down-to-earth people I have ever encountered! Being in a band is not something everyone has the knack for, being in a successful band (that is friendly) is even less common.

T\*House has taken New England by storm with their melodic blend of alternative/rock/borderline-hardcore (not to mention good looks) that is almost too good for words, the drummer is incredibly talented, both their guitarist and bassist have impeccable rhythm and timing and their singer has unbeatable stage presence (and a closet full of wacky outfits to accompany his non-stop supply of energy!).

The band did not form for the sole purpose of becoming "rock stars" (although it would be awfully nice), nor did they form to make money (after all, there is not that much money to be made touring the local scene). They formed for the sheer joy of having fun, making music, and sharing their love for a good time with anyone willing to give it a go. "The band is really way more talented than I am, I just get up there and wear crazy outfits and go insane." says front man J.J. Could it be true, not only are they talented but they're modest, too!? The blend of musicians adds to the overall intensity, you can clearly see these guys come from varied musical backgrounds.

The messages they send in the tracks found on their debut record *Groovaholic* (does that title not rock or what?) are motivating and relaxing at the same time. "Throw your hands up side to side, lay back and groove as I hypnotize" makes you want to chill and go crazy at the



# Almighty

by \*Samantha Selig\*

same time. There is definitely something for everyone within the walls of the T\*.

What has T\*House accomplished in the past year you ask? "The year 2000 was quite a year for T House of the Almighty. We accomplished a lot of things and made a lot of waves in the local rock scene. We started 2000 by crawling out of our bomb shelter clutching the things we most loved. Duff held his shiny black latex pants like Linus holding his blanky, J.J. protected his purple pimp hat like Scrooge protecting his money, Johnny danced waltz after waltz with his beloved guitar, and Dave was sitting on his drums like he was the leader of the free world. The Y2K bug did not destroy the world as we know it but it bit T House in the ass and we rocked club after club and show after show. We debuted a new website in the early months of 2000. We performed at Locobazooka. We put on a fan appreciation show at T Party 2000. We sold out of our first printing of CDs. We made it to the finals in a Battle of the Bands contest in Providence, RI. And now that we are in the year 2001 we do not intend on slowing down. We are releasing a full-length CD in February and we continue to rock club after club and show after show."

What is in store for T\*House in the up-and-coming months? Shows, shows, shows! Check them out this summer at the Linwood Bar and Grille (near Fenway Park), the Lucky Dog in Worcester, Club Fuel in Lowell, and The Elbow Room in New York City. (For

details concerning up and coming T\*House events please check their website, [www.talmighty.com](http://www.talmighty.com)). The live show is killer and must be experienced, even if you are not a fan of heavier music, give it a go. You never know when you could have the time of your life (as the *Phoenix* says "The night of your life is going to happen whether you are there or not, you might as well show up") and hey, you might as well make it a T\*House of the Almighty show, right?

Where are they going? Quite simply, the only place to go is up!



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**The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs** - *Waiting For The Death Of My Generation* - 12-song CD (Triple-X Records)

*Produced, Engineered, and Mixed by Brian Kehew; Recorded at Rotund Rascal in North Hollywood, CA; Mastered at Wally's Place in Hollywood, CA; Mastered by Judson Leach and Bob Lanzar at Technovoice*

It's nice to know that things are still going well on the other coast - at least musically they are, because this band's website wouldn't work. Oh well, it's really about the songs anyway and The Cheetahs full-on kicked the door open with a tune named "Right to Rock." Next. They're really smoking through another one called "Future Lost." I really like this and I hate everything. I saw on the Triple-X website (that's the label) that these guys are making their way across the South. I hope they can make it this far.... "Why You Gotta Come First" (nice title!) begins with an off-kilter riff that's fast and seems like the intro and then you realize it's the song; sort-of cool. "White Collar Money" has a nice chant of "C'mon and join the band wagon" in it....cool...I must admit they don't let up at all on this album. Eleven songs in on "In My Head," they've got classic guitar riffage starting the thing....definitely cool!!! I like this. Thank you for giving me this one, Jesse.

- Jonny Smash

★★★ Contact: [www.triple-x.com](http://www.triple-x.com) / [www.thestreetwalkincheetahs.com](http://www.thestreetwalkincheetahs.com) (maybe)



**Me First and the Gimme Gimmes** - *Blow in The Wind* - 13-song CD (Fat Wreck Chords)

*Recorded and Mixed by Ryan Greene at Motor Studios in San Francisco, CA; Assisted by Adam Krammer; Mastered by Eddy Schreyer at Oasis Mastering*

This is the punk rock answer to those of you who missed Dread Zeppelin in their heyday. Remember that? That first album and the first tour they were funny as hell...then the joke wore off. Fat Mike (NoFX) has assembled a strange group of friends to record souped-up versions of oddities ("Who Put The Bomp?," "Sloop John B," and "Stand By Your Man" to name a few) with some Clash and Ramones riffs thrown in to liven up the mix. They even get to tour as a cover band on the Warped Tour for the summer! Hell, sounds like a good time to me!! I'll be there at Suffolk Downs to relive my youth through these bozos. See you there??

- Jonny Smash

★★★1/4 Contact: [www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com)



**Gaza Strippers** - *Electric Bible: The New Testament* - 10-song CD (Triple-X Records)

*Engineered by Matt Allison and Jason Ward at Atlas Studios and Engine Studios, both in Chicago, IL; Produced by Rick Sims*

The first tune on this offering is called "Throttle Bottom" and has a line that goes "...I wanna throttle high, I'm gonna throttle down, I'm gonna stick it where it don't belong, I'm gonna throttle bottom!" Nice. Your moms must be proud. It did catch my attention, though. That's tough, considering how muddled the vocals were in the mix on some of these tunes. I mean, I never listen to the words, but I was noticeably straining at times in this case; that could well be because this is a piecemeal album put together from the best stuff that these guys had. I'll give 'em that. Nice crunchy guitar, high-energy stuff from these guys; too bad they need someone with a hundred percent I.Q. to write their words. Sounds like these young'uns are doing well for themselves out in the Midwest and even overseas, even with the lyrical problems. As a fellow Midwesterner, I'm pleased and wish 'em the best. I'll be intrigued to see what happens with these folks.

- Jonny Smash

★★★ Contact: [www.gazastrippers.com](http://www.gazastrippers.com) / [www.triple-x.com](http://www.triple-x.com)



**Drawn Butter** - *Self-titled* - 6-song CD - (You Like It Records)

*Recorded at Parr Audio, Martha's Vineyard; Produced by Stuart Kimball and Phil Greene; Mixed by Phil Greene*

Drawn Butter, a group comprised of various musicians who have played with names such as Bob Weir, Bo Diddley, David Bowie, and Peter Wolf has served up a lovely little CD that they describe as "well seasoned, contemporary yet pure R&B." Led by vocalist Sabrina Brooke, who belts out songs in a voice similar

to Sarah Dash (of Lady Marmalade), the six songs on the self-titled CD are solid, funky, and just a little bit dirty. From the mid-tempo opening track "Walkin' The Beam," to the exquisite light funk of "Your Secret Heart," which features a funky bass-driven sound, to the soft balladry of "Talk It Out," one listen shows that these are folks that know good music. The influences are apparent throughout the disc, with a little bit of the Stax sound here, a little bit of Isaac Hayes there, and the tight rhythm section and backing vocals present on every song. In addition, the production is crisp and clear, and the music seems to get a little bit better with every listen. The only point of criticism here (and it is a slight point) is that the songs, while all very good, are not the most original - we're going down well-traveled roads both lyrically and melodically on every track. However, there is no denying that Drawn Butter's CD is a joy to listen to, and the big question now is, "When will the next CD be out?"

- Neal Alpert

★★★★

Contact: (508) 693-8330

#### **Flat Five - 4-song CD**

Mixing blues, funk, and pop, Flat Five offer a unique brand of music that at times is appealing, but loses its shine off and on throughout the disc. Flat Five leaves the gate with "Tumbleweed," incorporating a well-structured intro of bluesy pop with a touch of Southern rock. However the above mentioned comes true as "Tumbleweed" falls apart during the verse, quickly losing its structured texture, and metamorphosis' into a more free style feel that doesn't compliment the rest of the track, a theme re-occurring throughout the disc. While guitarist Andrew Stern can hold his own, he too doesn't adhere to any musical grid, which is also evident in his solo for "Tumbleweed." With her sultry voice, and soothing melodies, vocalist Ilona Tipp is the only member of the group who can impress the listener entirely. But I guess if your front man/woman can't raise some eyebrows... Overall, Flat Five consist of good musicians that are probably very capable of delivering the best free-style jam session one may ever hear, but have little concern for musical backdrops.

- Karl Russo

★★

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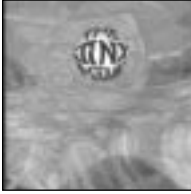
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**The Jinx Motive** - (Self-titled) - 11-song CD

*Produced by The Jinx Motive and Ken Polk; Mastered at M Works, Cambridge*

The Jinx Motive's debut album kicks off with the sound of a jazzy guitar lick over some beating drums, which gives way to a bland-ish John Scofield track called "Jinx Anthem." The song is not bad, but it is not terribly good, either. There is some meandering jazz guitar, some nice drum work, and some interesting passages here and there. However, this trio from Berklee School of Music need more than just proficiency with their instruments and a couple of cool Wes Montgomery licks to sustain a song, let alone an entire album. Sadly, the second song proved that track number one was not the aberration, but the norm. Succinctly put, this music was boring. Things perk up here and there, such as on "Twisted," which features a vocal line that would not be out of place in the quasi-jazz of Phish, and John Howland Jr.'s voice is pleasant enough. However, just in the tri-state area, there are handfuls of exciting jazz-funk bands around, and unless the members of The Jinx Motive can find a way to cook up some vinyl excitement, they might as well consider putting their technical know-how to use in one of those bands.

- Neal Alpert

★★ Contact: (617) 899-3267 / JinxMotive@aol.com



**Mata7** - 00:34:35:39 - 10-song CD

*Produced by Rolando Gonzalez, Jeff Crespo, Jose M. Lopez, and Pablo Estacio; Recorded at Random Media Studios, Boston, MA; Mastered by Dana J. White at 9WEST Mastering, Framingham, MA*

Mata7, a Spanish outfit, have taken what appears to be their stage show and laid it down for posterity on 00:34:35:39. The significance of the title escapes me, as there is no English contained in either the CD's packaging nor on the band's website. Regardless, the music contained within is fairly standard fare: Latin rhythms abound, in addition to the odd distorted guitar solo, and the nice percussive sounds. This CD is most likely not going to win Mata7 any new converts, but the quality of the musicianship is fine, and the songs, which all sound somewhat similar to each other, are inoffensive. So, slip it on at your next barbecue, while downing a few cold ones and watching the sun fade away. Mata7's disc is not going to be getting serious rotation on the stereo, but it would make fine background music at the next get-together.

- Neal Alpert

★★ Contact: www.mata7.com



**Downer** - 11-song CD (Roadrunner Records)

*Produced, Mixed and Engineered by Bob Mariette*

That's some twisted stuff right there dude. Heavy, heavy, heavy rock with most excellent bass sounds, fantastic drums, gorgeous guitars, and singing. (No, it's great singing but I ran out of fabulous descriptives.) It's a hard sounding yet melodic quartet, handsome gents all, with these super melodies. Yeah, real melodies. This is how it's done. The cover art is superb, the promo shot is pro, and the info sheet is comprehensive. That aside, we've got these tortuous chords and licks with these tortured lyrics as on explosive cut number four "Savior." This review doesn't give me enough room to talk in too much depth about how good this band is. Suffice to say the composition is exemplary, vocals world-class and looks spot on for the aughts. Titles (though I really could list all: "Bi-Furious," "Last Time," "Born Again," "Speed Teeth," "Ventilation," and "Mud Bath." My compliments. (duh)

- L.A. Joe

★★★★ Contact: (212) 274-7500 / www.downermusic.com

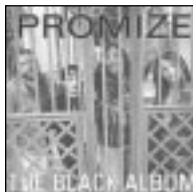
**Entrain** - *Letter To The World* - 4-song CD (Dolphin Safe Records)

Got the island aroma mahn. Not quite ska, but we do have the reggae feel going down and some wonderful African style group harmonies. Remember that Paul Simon album or the Lifesavers commercial? It's heavenly stuff. They didn't give us much info, but it sounds like a lot of folks playing and singing: at least two drummers/percussionists, bass, a guitar or two, might be some keyboards hiding in there, and I'm guessing a soprano sax player. Not to mention those gorgeous vocals (best part, says L.A.). Who knows these days. Could be one guy with a multi-track. So we've got three versions of "Letter To The World" and a bonus track name of "Dancin' in the Light" - that last one's live

so there goes my "one guy" theory. And man do they sound fabulous.

- L.A. Joe

★★★★ Contact: (818) 233-8888 /  
www.entrain.com



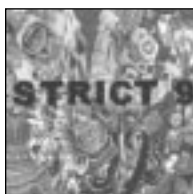
**Promize - The Black Album** - 12-song CD

Would that be Promize rhymes with sneeze, Promize rhymes with thighs, or Promize rhymes with miss? (Or ice if you'd like to wane Latin.) All

right, already, enough with the pronunciation. Three dudes, one (lovely) bit of babe-age and some fine melodic songs of dark downtrodden denizens of the - uh - (can't think of a suitable "D" word to continue sparky alliterative writing form). And man can she sing. You should hear the sexy verse and soaring chorus on "Pardon You." Then we switch to lo-fi pop rock with drums-too-loud on "Kel." Tough break that. Other guitar rockin' titles: "Solar Flare," "Dumb-head," "Triple A," "Hardly Wait," "Haunted House," and "Twilight." (Oh yeah, fill in my blank up there with your choice: devil, demon, dead, diatribe, deleterious, drivl, doo-doo.)

- L.A. Joe

★★★1/2 Contact: (413) 863-2848



**Strict 9** - 3-song CD  
*Recorded and Mixed at Fort Apache Studio, Cambridge, MA; Engineered by Brian Brown*

Oh, I get it. Like the rat poison right? What a hyuk. Got five folks thrashing

(and I mean thrashing) this hardcore rap rock rancor. (One of 'em, a guitar player, is a beautiful blond babe - the others, well four handsome fellers.) I'm loving the deadly groove on opening cut "Dead Game." (Didn't mean to pun, I looked up the title after I wrote "deadly".) So parenthetical phrases aside we've got thunder crunch, exploding drums and vocals suitable for a satanic requiem. (Dark enough for you?) Right on to the other titles of superb destructive energy: "Race War" and "Zip It." Uh-bud-eh uh-bud-eh uh that's all folks

- L.A. Gosh

★★★ Contact: (781) 893-0713 /  
www.strict9online.com

**Alan and the Alligators - Reptile Rock** - 15-song CD (I.E.M. Records)

*Produced by Alan Goodrich and Erik Ringstad*  
Say wasn't that a song by Elton John? Oh

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yeah - that was "Crocodile Rock." So - uh - what's the difference? That's it; alligator begins with an "A." We're aiming at the same pop rock market but Elton scored a bullseye. Got three lads here strumming up a storm on their funky guitars and bad-ass bass lines (for the most part). There are whimsical asides, however in the form of "Ain't Comin' Home" and we've got some smooth bits like "Every Day." "You Make Me Crazy" bellows the blues but I think their long suit is that string popping soul like on "No Deposit, No Return." Let's not overlook the acoustic guitar-powered songs (there's really not much funk). A few lovelies: "I Can See Forever (In Your Eyes)," "The Song You'll Never Hear," and my Hot Tuna

fave "waiting."

- L.A. Joe

★★★ Contact: (978) 369-2370 / [www.alligatorsband.com](http://www.alligatorsband.com)



**Twitchboy** - *American Far West* - 9-song CD

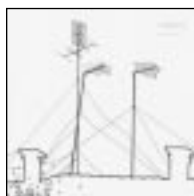
*Produced by Twitchboy and David Tarbox; Recorded & Mixed by David Tarbox and Twitchboy at Music Box Studios, Springvale, ME; Mastered by Lance Vardis at Big Sound, Westbrook, ME*

Oh it's heavy stuff. Mad crunch guitars and a whiff 'o the goth on opening cut "A Note." Got five fellers playing the stuff (geez I hope "Jade" the keyboard player is a dude - there's no clear picture - apologies if...) Right, so we've got guitars and bass and drums and vocals too. Some interesting twists and turns on this musical

jaunt into Portland, Maine (hey - York Beach is my second home). Nice words and a super lo-fi radio shack like type microphone vocal intro on "Back Asleep." But then we've got those wonderful vocals, dark tempo/feel, and mysterious bass line sneaking around our flank. You're gonna like this stuff. It's got a brain. Other titles sifted through my brain: "Single Malt Wisdom," "Mrs. Winslow," with its solo bass, then drums intro, "Spit Shine Sleaze" and "Cats and Traps."

- L.A. Joe

★★★ Contact: (207) 828-6814 / [www.twitchboy.com](http://www.twitchboy.com)



**Helms** - *The Swimmer* - 8-song CD (Kimchee Records)

*Recorded by Andy Hong; Mastered by Jeff Lipton at Peerless Mastering*

Unusual. Rather strange R&R these three are romping about in. Got a girl playing bass and some delicious chord changes. We even play with tempos and time signatures a bit. Got lots of mood and atmosphere on songs like "The Smallest World in the World." I'm digging the fresh drum bits and the other-than-ordinary guitar experimentations. They're not satisfied chomping through the same old chords and licks and lyrics everyone else has spat. I'm a fan. Fine, cool

vocals for the most part, then we wax cacophonous again on songs like "The Television Set." Other cool titles: "We Must Get There Before Dark, Follow Me," "Teenagers in the Woods," "10," "Ghosts with Searching Eyes," and "Candy Fish."

- L.A. Helmsman

★★★★ Contact: (978) 356-0093



**Reach The Sky** - *Friends, Lies, and The End of The World* - 12-song CD (Victory Records)

*Produced by Brian McTernan; Recorded at Salad Days, Washington DC; Mastered by Alan Douches at West West Side*

Oh lordy it's a punk group 'o the aughts and are they pissed. Everybody scream. No no. That's not what they sound like. They're surprisingly good. Four good looking, young gentlemen line up with a fence behind them in the promo shot. "This broken heart, is this my own invention? Let me tell you, it worked before I

met you. There is so much to lose and nothing to gain from this." Couple two tree lyrics for you from "The Truth So Familiar." That's my favorite but I also like "Raincheck" and "This Sadness Alone." "Goodbye and Goodluck" breaks the three chord barrier and "Wherever You Go" starts off like it's going to be a ballad (hey - no ballads in punk) but then we thrash resplendently. "My Updated Epitaph" sports big punches and lyrics as well.

- L.A. Joe

★★★ Contact: (312) 666-8661 x106 / [www.reachthesky.org](http://www.reachthesky.org)

#### **L4 Suicide** - 3-song CD

*Produced and Mixed by Brian Maes*

"...A four-piece urban metal band from Chelsea, MA." They mention their influences as being Reveille, Linkin Park, Papa Roach, Rage Against The Machine, and Metallica. I hear all that stuff in here; raging vocals, bashing guitars, rap, attitude, and the crunch thunder o' the Gods. I think they show some promise. I'd like to produce some of their stuff properly and see what we could do, who knows? So, the titles "Suicidal Freestyle," "Injustice Society," and my very best favorite "Sickseed." "Greed is the seed - greed is the seed." Sounds about right.

- L.A. Joe

★★1/2    Contact: (781) 231-9925 / [www.l4suicide.com](http://www.l4suicide.com)



#### **Tiny Huge** - *Once Upon A Time* - 11-song CD

*Produced by Ed Morrill and Mark Jay; Mixed by Dave Westner at Woolly Mammoth, Boston, MA; Mastered by Colin Decker at M Works, Cambridge, MA*

Got four fellers rustling up the pop songs with guitars, bass, keyboards, drums, and vocals. The arrangements are straightforward and simple. The lyrics are surely shooting for the commercial path - my guess - obvious eh? Couple songs about love and babes and lost love and babes and loneliness and - well you get the picture; your standard radio fare. I don't hear a smash, breakthrough radio hit but some of the songs have a bit more merit than others. Here's my list: "Chemical," "Mon Ami," "That Was The Night," "Ride The Wind," and my fave 'o the bunch "Angela" though I may have named that last one after its repetitive hooky line "All Night Long."

- L.A. Joe

★★1/4    Contact: (617) 408-2039 / [tinyhuge@usa.com](mailto:tinyhuge@usa.com)



#### **Wolf Roxon** - *Legend of the Lost* - 16-song CD

*Engineered and Produced by Wolf Roxon; Mastered by DRT Mastering, Peterborough, NH*

Lo-fi pop rock 'o the '60s. Lots of zippy Beatles influence and some fine vocal harmonies reminiscent of 10CC. Guitar solos are darned simple but we've got some lovely melodies and commercial lyrics. Looks as though Wolf did just about everything himself on half a dozen or so. Yup - he wrote 'em, played 'em, sang 'em, engineered 'em, and produced 'em (says so on the CD insert). He's been at it for about 35 years (deduced that all by myself I did). I keep coming back to those wonderful three-part backing harmonies as the top of this hill. Tunes for consideration: "Then I Will Leave You Alone," "Can't Call You Mine," "I'd Like To Do Everything More," "At My House," and "I'm So Sad."

- L.A. Joe

★★1/4    Contact: [wolfroxon@yahoo.com](mailto:wolfroxon@yahoo.com)



#### **Treatment Bound** - 4-song CD

Got a three-member - post-punk apocalyptic outfit here with all that mad energy we've come to expect with anything vaguely associated with punk. It's loose at the edges and I savor the scrappy time and performance. Good-looking bunch in their sneakers and leather. The recording is suitably lo-fi; the grimaces are spot on punk attitude. Yeah baby - we could care less about...about everything including you and me and ma and (I'm bored). Right, so we've got four titles and here they are: "Straight To Hell," "Dreams," "Images," and (there is again) "Bored."

- L.A. Joe

★★1/4    Contact: (617) 388-5100 / [www.treatmentbound.com](http://www.treatmentbound.com)



#### **Mike Previti** - (Self-titled) - 4-song CD

*Produced by David Minehan and Mike Previti; Recorded at Woolly Mammoth Studios, Boston, MA; Mastered at M-Works, Cambridge, MA*

A basic rule of thumb that most musicians recognize is that, when making a four-song CD, there is not a lot of time to make an impression with the public. Four songs, in fact, is a dangerously small amount of material for people to form an opinion on because just one terrible song in the bunch will stand out that much more due to the lack of better material padding it. Luckily for Mike Previti,

this is not an issue. His self-titled four-song CD begins with the light pop of "On My Heel," a mid-tempo piece that kicks off with a drum snippet, followed by a blasting guitar, and a very confident vocal. Track number two is another mid-tempo piece that shuffles along as a nice melody line builds itself up. "Ada," track number three, is the first standout tune, with a radio-friendly sound wrapped around unique melodies that don't go where you expect them to. The album ends on its strongest song, "Angry," which has a lullaby like melody with a good hook, a strong vocal from Previti, and a lovely, textured atmosphere to it. Previti has served up an interesting introduction disc, and it is left until his full-length follow-up for us to see what this guy can do when he gets the chance to stretch out a bit.

- Neal Alpert

★★★ Contact: [www.mikepreviti.com](http://www.mikepreviti.com) / (781) 438-4640

**The Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash** - 12-song CD (Ultimatum Records)

*Produced by Mark Stuart and Jack White*

Yeeehaaaa! They're the convoy cowboys of country. The Bastards Sons of Johnny Cash ain't just a pretty name. Their music seems directly inspired by the "man in black" himself. From the bluesy and billowing vocal chords, of the pleasantly untwangy Mark Stuart, to the pedal steel guitar, quivering and holding in the air around, those Bastards have created a blend of happiness and heartbreak straight out of a Texas diner jukebox. By the by, the Bastards are pretty good looking..each one should be fitted for a saddle. (I just love being able to toss around the word "bastard" in context.) The whittling of story in song gives the melody and rhyme an old school simplicity, that is sincere and straight from the ol' blood pumper. I'm hoping their arrival marks the end of Faith Hill and all the other hokey duet singing, mid-drift showing, blond haired, blue-eyed "country girls." They cover Merle Haggard's "Silver Wings" and Dale Watson's "Truckstop in La Grange," and do both modestly, naturally, and without distraction. It's the kind of music that persuades even those most vehemently opposed to country to come over to the two-steppin' side. I had a couple near and dear to me: "Interstate Cannonball," "Walk Alone," and "440 Horses." Dixie Chicks wave goodbye to Earl, the Bastards are here and their truck is fully loaded.

- Ma-cl

★★★★ Contact: (323) 936-4841 / [joe.rinaldi@found-music.com](mailto:joe.rinaldi@found-music.com)



**Joe Strummer and The Mescaleros** - *Global A Go-Go* (Hellcat Records)

Joe Strummer is a free man. And he wants to set us free. Along with The Mescaleros he sets out to free the world one set of ears, one heart, one mind, one soul at a time. Listening to the aptly titled *Global A Go-Go* for the umpteenth time on my way to work this morning, it dawned on me - Joe is the John Lennon of my generation. A true world citizen whose convictions about love, community, spirituality, and injustice that called from London and seethed with the Sandanistas are now even deeper and broader in scope. Sonically speaking, *Global A Go-Go* is a weird banquet of styles and instrumentation. There are acoustic guitars, electric guitars, drum set, old synths, violins, wind instruments, tape loops, hand drums, and of course, Joe's voice. That voice. The songs themselves bear a million influences. From Woody Guthrie to Guatamala, Sergio Leoni to the Stones, Joe takes us on his personal charter flight. But all of this is held together with the glue of simplicity. It is, simply put, genius. *World A Go-Go* hits the street on July 24th. Buy it. That's what John Lennon would do.

- Jesse "Guns of Brixton" Mayer

★★★★

**Laine Henderson** - (Self Titled) - 3-song sampler

I have gained a whole new respect for Janis J. Why is it the majority of female musicians who sell in the music business today, look like innocence untapped, sound like Harriet Wheeler, write like Olivia Newton John, and feel like a "Dawson's Creek" episode? Oi! Teenage and sappy, Laine Henderson gives a new meaning to the term soda sweet beat. With safely simple guitar licks, and a tinny drum beat, she pushes what could have been considerably decent songwriting into the overtly saccharin soaked, fem-pop we've grown to expect. Folks, simple isn't bad, but own your simplicity. Half-assed simplicity is worse than a root canal. Her voice is very pretty to be honest. Her problem is the monotone she sings in. It seems like she's just singing what's written in front of her, which is fine, but it doesn't help me relate or believe she can relate, to what she's choking. I know that not every song can be a personal experience, but the art of fine song telling is to make your audience believe that you've been there before. I just couldn't believe. I did like the song "No Back Door." It's



a one way sort of song, and you can never leave the way you came in.

- Ma-cl

★★



**Lonesome Brothers - Swamptown Girl - 12-song CD**  
*Produced by Finn Weeks and the Lonesome Brothers*

I love me some *Swamptown Girl*. Yep, this ones a downer with some upbeat flashes. It's all about chasing ghosts and looking for comfort in discomfort. It was hard to see the poetry in the lyrics, and the disdain over the happy, honky tonkin' music. Yet, there they were; intense and frayed, and bleeding with nostalgia. I found there to be a melange of musical comparatives. The majority of it was bluegrass, but there were moments of line stepping country, rockabilly, and just a dusting of old school blues. For the most part it was slow going... like rocking chair, slow going, but it was a fitting mood, and speed for the music. There were some moments of fun and fightin'. "Swamptown Girl" for one was a pure beer guzzling, sleazy bar brawling, backwashed cup of rock and down-home, country blues. Also a fist full of aces? "A Way Out of No Way" and "Reckless World." Of course, what's more morose sounding then the lap steel guitar? A Mandolin, perhaps? If Tom Waites wrote the songs, and a Frankensteined creature made of parts from both Randy Newman and Elvis Costello sang the lyrics, you'd have the Lonesome Brothers. It was down-right heavyhearted and it was beautiful.

- Ma-cl

★★★1/2    Contact: (413) 268-7059 / (413) 527-8067

**Pleasure Forever - (Self Titled) - 10-song CD (SubPop Records)**

*Produced by Pleasure Forever; Engineered by Tim Green; Mastered by John Golden*

Pleasure Forever is an overindulgent feast of sin. Ten depraved songs gorging in organ powered, nightmare rock. Andrew Rothbards vocals are passionate like the touch of strange hands in a violating place. Polluted thoughts, dribbling wine. Heavy, pendulous, carnival of hell type of spew-

The advertisement for Zing Recording Studios features a large, stylized, 3D logo for 'Zing' in a bold, italicized font. Below the logo, the words 'Recording Studios' are written in a white, sans-serif font inside a dark oval. The background of the entire ad is a light gray with a pattern of small, dark, circular dots. Below the logo, the text '32 Track ADAT XT20 - MCI JH636 - Pro Tools - Neumann - Neve' is listed in a bold, sans-serif font. Below that, 'Lexicon - TC Electronic - Avalon - Steinway' is listed in a similar font. Then, '500 Sq. Foot Live Room - CD / Cassette Duplication' is listed. At the bottom, 'Westfield, MA 413-562-8823' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.



ings, ladden with funeral candle wax. The mallady of it reminds me a little of Mr. Bungle, eats Faith No More, eats Inspiral Carpets. Rothbard is equally exceptional in his silent movie type, piano progressions. David Clifford's drumming shouts cavernously loud whispers into the dark background, keeping a blazingly uncouth waltz time signature. Joshua Hughes' guitar riffs bequeath unto us the secrets of the ominous damned. Combined, their sound looks deep in through your soul with uncomfortable anxiousness and a sexy villainy. Some personal picks: "Goodbye", "Any Port in the Storm," "Curtain Call for a Whispering Ghost," "Magus Opus"...hell they're all phenomenal.

- Ma-cl

★★★★ Contact: (206) 441-8441 / [www.subpop.com](http://www.subpop.com)



**Red House Painters - Old Ramon** - 10-song CD (SubPop Records)

*Produced by Mark Kozelek*

If heroin could make noise, this is what it would sound like. Red House Painters have created silent rainstorms with *Old Ramon*, 10 songs of serenity that make you sink down into your soul and prune up in a tub of your own inadequacy and confusion. The sixth album to be put out by RHP, it is alive with subdued passions and quiet acceptance. The album is reminiscent of Grant Lee Buffalo's "Copperopolis," cruising in the slow lane when it's at its most upbeat. In 2/3 time with hazy guitars and whispering drums, it is Kozelek's dreamy voice that carries the music. He is somewhere between Bob Mould ("Workbook") and eery Neil Young. "Ramon" is the most mature kind of rock. Sensitive, and thoughtful... something "adults" would make out to, if that makes sense. There was a comparison I didn't agree with, that being the mirroring of Mark and the Painters to one Mr. Jeff Buckley. Where Buckley wore his dejection, anger, and passion with a sense of wanting to be hopeful, Kozelek willingly perceives his defeat. His lyrics and melody ache in a weepy, tired state of mind. He's a broken man.

- Ma-cl

★★★★1/4 Contact: [www.subpop.com](http://www.subpop.com) / (206) 441-8441

**Blood for Blood - Wasted Youth Brew** (Victory Records)

This CD rocks! Boston hardcore/metal at its finest. I'm sure anyone familiar with the scene has heard about/seen these guys, and I would venture to say many of you love them. Nice, fat grooves, an incredible vocalist, an abundance of fast beats, and true hardcore/punk roots make this an album to remember! Songs worthy of the repeat button include "All this and More," "Soulless," "Paper Gangster," and "Chaos." The disc also features 11 live tracks. I myself do not usually care for live songs on CD, but this makes you feel like you are front row, center (in a mosh pit of course) at a Blood for Blood concert, you need to buy this CD.now!

- \*Samantha\*

★★★★ Contact: (212) 673-6352



**Sugarcoat** (Self-titled) - 10-song CD

*Recorded and mixed at Courtlen Recording, Handson, MA by Fred Danner; Produced and Mixed by Fred Danner and Sugarcoat; Mastered by Henk Kooistra at 9-West Mastering*

Sugarcoat's latest self-titled release is a sound for sore ears. Sophista-funk led by a talented female singer with professional top-flight musicians. Immediately evident is the high quality of musicianship in this large eight-member ensemble. Stellar keyboard work throughout the album. I hear a fusion of The Brand New Heavies and Tower of Power. This is a very tight band, folks. Sassy grooves mixed with sharp horns and solid rhythm section work make for an outstanding sounding album. The lead vocalist has a smooth and sultry voice that jells well with the polished delivery of the band. Not an in-your-face type funk band, which is the origin of the funk style, this slick Sugarcoat style is just as unique. Another impressive and powerful funk act from the Boston area. Favorite's are "Get on Up," "Time's Up," and "I Warned You." I bet live they're simply outstanding and I see them doing great things with the release of this fine album...and that's not sugar-coated!!

- Double A

★★★★3/4 Contact: [www.sugarcoat.net](http://www.sugarcoat.net)

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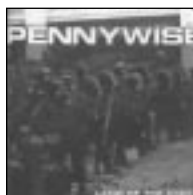
## **Shaman - (Self-titled) - 4-song CD**

A big sounding three-piece group, Shaman's sound immediately refers me to bands like Tool and many of those original "underground" dark metal bands. Shaman has a very dark approach to their songs with lots of guitar and moving parts. I think this band is on the right track as far as originality. I heard some cool moments in their tunes with good musicianship. They have a nice feel for the heavy and ominous groove, accented by fine drumming. I hear their music in a violent, action-laden movie. Shaman's songs are on the long side, which is fine when it's kept interesting and on the whole they are. This is a good effort by this heavy and profound band. Good musicianship, impact in their music, and ferocity in their delivery. Watch out for Shaman!

- Double A

★★★

Contact: [www.shaman99.com](http://www.shaman99.com)



## **Pennywise - Land of the Free? - 14-song CD (Epitaph Records)**

*Produced by Joe Barresi and Pennywise; Engineered and Mixed by Joe Barresi; Recorded at Stall#2, Redondo Beach, CA; Mixed at SOL Seven Recording, Sherman Oaks, CA; Mastered by Gene Grimaldi at Oasis Mastering, Studio City, CA*

Pennywise's album *Land of the Free?* is a potent and forceful statement. Driving punk rock with extremely solid and talented players, this effort really shines musically and communicatively. First thing to hit you over the head is the production - it's excellent. The guitar sounds were simply huge, audible and full of "fire." The low end on this album was also kicking ass! That's a phat production team behind this album. Lyrically this album also shines. Not that there's any deep writing with a thesaurus in one hand but an in-your-face assault on politics, organized religion, and everyday battles with the negatives in life. Lyrics are aggressive, to the point, and at times clever. Musically Pennywise deliver a ferocious up tempo onslaught with some catchy harmonies and hooks. Pennywise kept their tunes interesting, musical, yet savage. This band is really tight, true to their form, and professionalism is evident in every aspect.

*Land of the Free?* is a very compelling message from Pennywise. This album was a kick you know where....!! Excellent!!

- Double A

★★★★

Contact: [www.pennywise.com](http://www.pennywise.com)



## **Ecstatic - Green Light Green Jade - 11-song CD**

*Produced by Ecstatic; recorded at Ultrasound Studios, Hanover, MA; Engineered by Joe Clapp; Assistant engineer, Chris Cote; Mastered by Joe Clapp at Ultrasound*

Their name and CD cover belies what's inside - I'm not quite sure what I expected...a lively, upbeat pop band, maybe a bit on the dated side (sorry, guys, it was the photo...the one you used on the inside cover should have been on the outside cover) - instead what I got was an acoustic, folksy, soothing, beautifully harmonic group - I guess nowadays just called contemporary, folk/singer/songwriter music. Though the mix at times sounds sparse, the space is filled nicely with the sweet voices of Laurel Christie and Liz Christmann (who both also play percussion) complemented by Ian Campbell on guitars and keyboards and Steve Coburn on acoustic bass and keyboards. For the most part, Ecstatic is low key, relaxing, mellow but just as you're settling into a vocally dominated ride, they delightfully twist you out of that zone into another facet of their talent - such as some nice rock guitar in "Green Jade" or the edgier "Jelly" or the hypnotic guitar lines in "Selfish" - a great display of diversity, which is needed as most of the songs are pretty consistent in that you hear two harmonious female vocals deliver acoustic tunes - not that this is bad, but an occasional curve eliminates the potential for being too predictable. This is not commercial, radio-ready yet as it is quite bare bones, but definitely college radio could pick up on it or shows that focus on this style of music. Nice, sincerely, folksy alt tunes - my picks, in addition to the aforementioned, "Precious" and "Monster Suite."

- Debbie Catalano

★★1/2

Contact: (508) 224-3880 / [www.ecstatic4.com](http://www.ecstatic4.com)



**Owen - Three Songs For You - 3-song CD**

*Produced by Dan McLoughlin; Recorded at Renaissance; Mastered at M Works by Matthew Azevedo*

Spirited music that pop, jangles, and rocks with energy - and the delivery is just the half of it. The other half is the songs - catchy, accessible, and fun, Owen introduces themselves very well in *Three Songs For You*. "The More I Think Of You" offers tasty twangy guitar spliced with a cool, friendly, catchy overall sound; "Never Enough" is very appealing; while "How 'Bout You" is a song just waiting for that audience to jump to its feet and share in the band's energy - it's surely a hit live. The five members that make up Owen have, according to their bio, "played in various bands the past 10 years" and have performed in "over 300 shows in clubs in Boston" and New England. That experience shows as does the ability to kick it up live and pull an audience into their ardor and vivacity. I'm looking forward to hearing more from Owen in the future.

- Debbie Catalano

★★★

Contact: [www.owenband.com](http://www.owenband.com)



**Kelly Walsh - Cinderella Stories - 6-song CD**

*Produced by Robert Hanson and Kelly Walsh; Engineered by Paul Bish; Recorded at Horizon Studios, Attleboro, MA; Executive producer, Robert Hanson*

I love it when I receive a CD and it ends up being a refreshing surprise - Kelly Walsh simply shines in her six-song CD, *Cinderella Stories*. Laden with texture, clear passion, and layers of terrific sounds, Rhode Island's Kelly Walsh impresses with this CD. Though Kelly is a singer/songwriter, she is not alone in this recording, her songs are injected with excellent instrumentation for along with her guitar playing she has supporting musicians Mark O'Brien on bass and drums, Robert Hanson on acoustic and electric "strums," and Paul Bish on piano. The result: A very well-recorded, beautifully and superbly arranged CD. Certain songs highlight percussion, piano, acoustic guitar - whatever choices that were made, I applaud, for they shape and define the vibe of each particular song. For example, one of my favorites on the CD, "Glass Slippers" comes across dreamy and inspiring - thanks to Kelly's delivery and the piano section. "Herald My Heart" shows that Kelly can add bite to the songs when called for; convincingly emoting the lyrics of the songs, she is surrounded by a warm, jangly sound that goes back and forth between the jumpy, percussive beats to a more rock guitar...very dynamic. The other tune that stood out was the opening number, "Swill" - a catchy tune that features nice percussive rhythms and guitars, along with Kelly's voice. I hope to see and hear more from Kelly Walsh as she is a talent just waiting to emerge and others would benefit from and truly enjoy the sincerity and energy that she offers through her music.

- Debbie Catalano

★★★

Contact: (401) 419-4599 or [www.kellywalsh.com](http://www.kellywalsh.com)

**Mappari - High Enough To Notice - 11-song CD**

*Mixed, Mastered, and Produced by Rob Stevens*

Yes! The much-anticipated release of Mappari's new album! This is great music folks. Mappari is a band that gives you all they have - and that is a lot. A great sounding pop group with some very deep soundscapes and messages I feel this album is outstanding. I can feel their originality shine through with interesting passages, arrangements, and intros. I hear everything from a Gin Blossoms-style melodic and driving feel to a much eluded to Led Zeppelin darkness and soul to their more sonorous ballads. Mappari have powerful vocals with some really nice top-end male harmonies that drive the songs and hooks. The recording is pristine with a nice full sound with all the instruments and vocals at perfect levels and mixes. Mappari is really strong on leaving space and writing songs that seem to progress from part to part, which is interesting to the listener. My favorites were "Sedition," "Together," "Glue," and "La Fin Du Monde." With people like Rob Stevens at the helm (Chili Peppers, John Lennon, Eric Clapton, Jewel) Mappari are ready and poised to blow up and become a major player on our commercial and college airwaves.

- Double A

★★★★

Contact (212) 730-1035

*Send your CDs, press kits, videos, and products for review to:  
Boston SoundCheck Magazine, 389 Main St., Suite 301, Malden, MA 02148*



## THE PROMO KIT, Part One

Hey all! Before we get started, there's on thing I want to clear up. In the second part of "Your Music, Your Money," which ran in April, I mentioned in the last paragraph that the current statutory rate for compulsory licenses was \$.755. That was a typo that should have read \$.0755. I apologize.

In "Let 'Em Hear It," I briefly touched on promo kits. For this month and next, I will be addressing the promo kit and those issues further and discuss some of the do's and don'ts of promo kit etiquette.

A promo or press kit is a package of promotional materials that usually accompanies a press-worthy item such as a new CD or announcement of current tour dates. Its goal is to generate interest for the artist. For the unknown artist it is used to get press and other exposure and for the national artist it is used to present a demo of an upcoming record to a label and already includes an abundance of press.

The first item that is seen in the kit is the cover letter. It should introduce the band and reference the other items in the kit, stating why the kit was sent out. For example, if you're sending a new CD, you would say, "Enclosed is our new CD..." The cover letter should be addressed to a specific person and should reference any past meeting you may have had with your recipient. Copies of past press clippings such as interviews and CD reviews, are other items should be included as well. Use only positive reviews especially if you're a new band. There is some truth to the saying, "There is no such thing as bad publicity" but if you're new to the scene, industry professionals want to know what makes you better than the rest.

When sending a CD, a professional copy should be included with your best song first. Make an effort to not use home recordings unless you've spent a truckload of money on a professional quality studio. Take the shrink-wrap off the jewel box because that stuff is a pain to remove and irks a lot of industry professionals. Be sure that your contact information is legibly printed on the CD label and in the liner notes. Include a page or two listing upcoming show dates and radio stations that have spun your music. If you've been played on commercial radio, state if it was during their local show or during regular airtime. This could give you more credibility if you were played during morning rush hour. Aside from these necessities, various optionals can be included such as T-shirts, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, posters, and key chains; all of which sport your logo. This type of stuff can be quite pleasing to industry pros. Make it look original and differentiate yourself. You will make a better impact and have a better chance of being remembered by doing something unique such as the hyper-color kit that I mentioned in "Let 'Em Hear It." As always, use letterhead with your logo on it and print your contact info on all pieces of paper that aren't copies of press clippings. Insert your materials in a folder with your logo printed on the front by a printing or graphic design agency/specialist.

That was the easy stuff. Now for the difficult part. Aside from your music, one of the most important parts of your kit is the photos. This element gives a visual representation of who you are. Portrait photos are preferred over landscape. They're easier to manage when fitting them with an editorial. Determining the location for the shot should be taken seriously. Pick a place where the band will stand out from the background. Shooting at a studio is usually a safe bet regarding this issue but can lend itself to being a little dry. Using a real world landscape such as a bar or somewhere outside can give the picture more life. Look away from the camera until the shot is taken. This will avoid the dreaded perma-smile. Be careful with clothing. Don't wear similar clothing unless you intend to create a unity theme akin to early Beatles. If four out of five members wear black and one wears white, that person will be perceived to be the front man. It's also a good idea to experiment with movement such as jumping or using props such as your instruments. When the shot is done, carefully inspect the print to check for flaws such as lack of focus, objects such as people's hands that may have got in the way, or bad shadows. Print larger versions of the shots and then cut them down after, if they are too big. Depending on your budget one photo is usually enough but you may submit more. If you have a reputation of being a great live band then you may want to submit a live shot along with a still. Just be careful to not overdo it.

See you next month when we look at the most important part of the kit, the bio.

---

*Karl is a graduate of U Mass Lowell with a degree in Music Business  
and is available for further questions at [kahli6@hotmail.com](mailto:kahli6@hotmail.com)*



## ASK THE VOCAL COACH

Hello my friends! I hope your month has been filled with music and singing. Here is a question and answer I thought might be of interest.

### ***Ear Tuning or Vocal Technique?***

*Q: "I would like to ask about pitch and 'carrying a tune.' I am not the best of singers but like many others, still must sing at times. What practices or methods can be used to help with pitch? Does singing scales or singing a capella help?" F.B.*

**A:** Many mistakenly believe that nothing can be done to develop the ability to carry a tune and that if you can't, you're "tone deaf." This is not true. A person can always improve as long as they're willing to do the work and take the correct steps. Even a person who is totally unable to "carry a tune" can, with the right techniques, adequate practice, and determination, eventually sing songs on pitch. Singing a capella is not the way to improve pitch. The key lies in starting at the correct level for the individual and progressing in an exact step-by-step program.

### ***Self Test...***

Using a piano or guitar, check the following: One octave below middle C, play a C. (Females would start on the same pitch but right on the middle C.) Try singing the same note using an "Ah" vowel sound. Play the note again and see if you matched it. Play another note near that one. Try singing it. If you have trouble matching the notes you've played, then you need to work on developing this ability by playing and singing single pitches before getting to song work. If this is the stage you're presently at, you'd also be better off working with an ear training teacher as one-on-one guidance will help you progress fastest and with less frustration. There are also some ear training self-study courses available, but I'm not familiar with them and don't know their actual result rate.

If you can already carry a melody and have only occasional pitch problems, singing scales and short melodies with piano accompaniment will be helpful. As you improve, you can play the chord and sing the scale or melody over it and then check your accuracy by playing it.

### ***Technical Problems...***

Singing off-pitch does not, however, have to be a "hearing" problem. It can also be the result of inadequate vocal technique. In this case the vocal muscles are being manipulated such that they can't produce the exact pitch, even though you "hear" it. Closing off on a word too quickly into its consonants can also throw off a singer's pitch by tightening throat muscles. If you've ever played a reed instrument, you know that if you tighten your lips too much, the reed can't vibrate and you'll either get a "sour note," a squeak, or no sound at all.

Record yourself singing a song on any simple recording device. Listen back paying attention to how you pronounced the words. Are you tightening your mouth on the consonants and trying to sing through them at the same time? Your vocal sounds are the result of vowels not consonants. Consonants have the liability of locking and possibly squeezing the throat muscles, which need to be more relaxed during vowel sound creation. Different musical and personal styles often involve different pronunciations. So I'm not suggesting "one size fits all" word pronunciations; however, regardless of the way you pronounce your words, squeezing the shapes of your consonants causes strain and can throw off your pitch. So check it out and see if there's anything in this area to correct.

Too many singers are led to believe they have "ear" problems when they don't. They simply need to learn how to let their instrument function properly. To discover the correct source of any pitch problems, it can be helpful to consult a vocal professional and receive a knowledgeable assessment of your voice. Then you can identify your strong and weak points and determine whether you need ear training or voice technique. Hope this helps!

*Jeannie Deva, is the founder and director of The Voice Studio and The Deva Method, a NonClassical Approach for Singers. She teaches in Boston, Los Angeles, and London. The Voice Studio is located in Boston with annexes in Plymouth and Weymouth. Clients include Aimee Mann, Coppertree, Moodcrush, Dar Williams, Patty Griffin, and members of the J. Geils band, cast of Fame, Jesus Christ Superstar and many more. For information on her home study course and other services contact THE VOICE STUDIO, 169 Massachusetts Ave. Boston 888- 536- 7464, Email: [info@TheVoiceStudio.com](mailto:info@TheVoiceStudio.com), Website: [www.TheVoiceStudio.com](http://www.TheVoiceStudio.com)*





# D 2 D

This month I wanted to talk to you a little bit about some other chord forms. Yes this is very important in your basic music theory. Let's look at the 5th degree and the 7th degree of the major scale. The best way to show you is in the key of C since there are no sharps or flats.

Remember a few lessons back we talked about primary and secondary chords? I want to show the 5th and 7th. C,D,E,F,G,A,B. The 5th degree of the scale will be G. The chord will be G7 or dominant, the formula is 1,3,5,b7, (G,B,D,F). Now the 7th degree of the scale will be a Bmin7b5, the formula 1,b3,b5,b7(B,D,F,A). The 7th degree is called the leading tone

because it has a strong tendency to lead to the tonic, which is the lowest and highest tone of the scale. Now notice in each of these chords that there are three notes that are similar to one another, hence substitution. Yes, you can substitute the two chords for one another the 5th is the primary and the 7th is the secondary.

Now for the 5th degree of the scale the mode is called mixolydian and you start on the G noting that you play the same notes contained in the C major scale. G mixolydian: GABCDEF/G major scale GABCDEF#. The 7th degree is called Locrian: BCDEFGA/ B Major scale BC#D#EF#G#A#. Notice the difference in modes to scales.

Finishing off here are a few different voicings and some patterns for you to play over these chords.

G<sup>7</sup>

G F B D

B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub>

B F A D

G<sup>7</sup> (5)

D B F

B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub> (b3)

D B F

G<sup>7</sup>

B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub>

G<sup>7</sup> (5)

B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub> (b3)

G<sup>7</sup>

B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub>

G<sup>7</sup> (5)

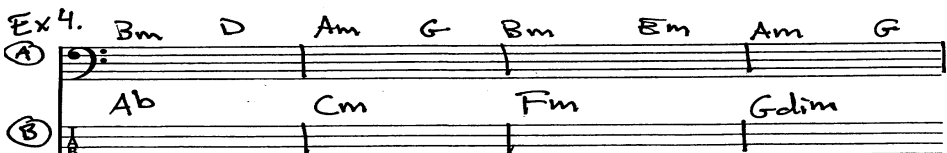
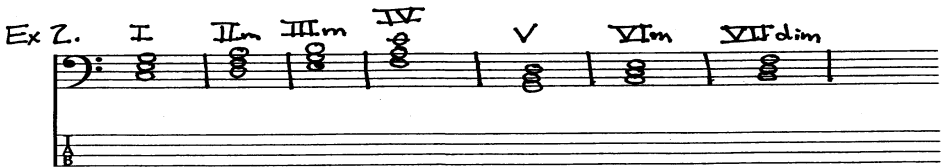
B<sub>m</sub><sup>7</sup>b<sub>5</sub> (b3)



## WHAT KEY AM I IN

What's up bass world? Summertime in the city and beautiful people everywhere! Ever jam or learn a new song and try to get away from just the root? First thing you have to do to know where you are and what scales/modes to use in your lines, is to know what key you're in. There are some basic and immediate ways to do this. On simpler chord progressions the first chord can be the key of the song, which is quite frequent in all music. Another way is to know the diatonic order of chords in a major scale. With seven notes in a major scale we can build a triad with the root of each note of the scale. Ex. 1 shows how we construct the first five triads of the scale. In this example we will be in the key of C major (no sharps or flats, commonly used as an example). Just start on the first note of the scale and go up in thirds. Notice that some triads are major and some are minor. This is why Roman numerals are used (I, IV, VII) because they are the same in every key. Ex. 2 shows the triads with their Roman numerals. Notice that the I, IV, and V chords are major, the II, III, and VI are minor, and the VII is diminished. Memorize this!! Now you're ready to analyze chord progressions. Ex. 3 gives you a simple progression in the key of C. Which key is exercise 4 in? Some progressions do work in more than one key so you can look at the melody for more clues. You can also use this formula for diatonic seventh chords. Simply add another third over your initial triads. The sequence is: the I and IV are major seventh chords, the V is a dominant seventh (seventh is lowered a half step), the II, III, and VI are minor sevenths, and the VII is a minor seven flat five chord. Very important stuff to help you create and perform bass lines, or any musical line, in conjunction with the key that the progression is in. Grab a 'fake' book and see if you can figure out the keys in the songs or just certain sections. With a little work this can be a huge help to your overall musical education. Now we're ready for the beach!!

Ex 1



Send me your questions or feedback via e-mail at: [tuaze@yahoo.com](mailto:tuaze@yahoo.com)



**Divas: Billie Holiday** - by Chris Ingham - 138 pages. \$12.95  
*Unanimous / Welcome Rain*

As part of a small but well-established series of critical biographies on some of the greatest female voices of our age (a series which also includes Aretha, Judy and Barbra), Chris Ingham has taken at least a great deal of the myriad of history and anecdote about "Lady Day" (née Eleanora Harris) and distilled it into a comprehensive yet comprehensible volume. Combining his own facts and details with the attempts of many others, including famous bandleaders and bandmates like Bennie Goodman (with whom Billie apparently also had an offstage relationship) Lester Young (to whom Ingham claims Holiday gave the lasting nickname "Pres"), Ingham helps to separate the wheat of legend from the chaff of infamy. Tracing Holiday's growth from a lonesome and troubled adolescent to a famous but still more troubled woman grown old too fast, Ingham gives some excuses for Holiday's self-destruction while subtly warning others against following her path in every aspect. In so doing, he demonstrates the benefits and banes of such a no holds barred and no excuses attitude that eventually reversed itself in a miserable and ultimately fatal crash.

mately fatal crash.

Complete with a discography of Holiday's most authentic albums (as opposed to the bin-bursting piles of reissues that have tried to leech onto her legend), a well-researched critical essay and bibliography, and a depictive photo layout, Ingham's portrait of Holiday may not be the most comprehensive, but neither is it too foreboding for the interested fan of music or history.

- Matthew S. Robinson

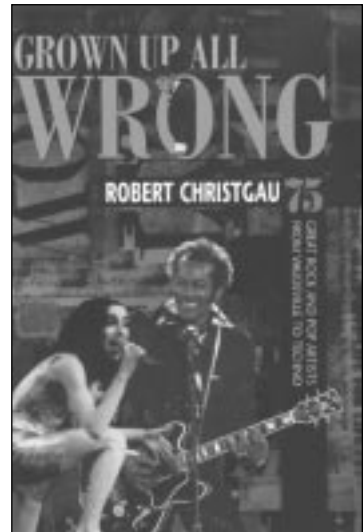
**Grown Up All Wrong** - by Robert Christgau - 492 Pages;  
\$18.95

*Harvard University Press*

Known for his honest and insightful criticisms in *The Village Voice*, Robert Christgau been "wasting his time on rock" for nearly three decades. Now, he has put it all (or, at least, most of it) together in this grand compendium of essays on artists ranging from B.B. King to P.J. Harvey. A pop critic in the vanguard of the alternative press, Christgau tells it like it is (or, at least, as he would prognosticate it to be), offering bold opening statements like "Jimi Hendrix was a rock hero like no other" and revelations like "critics didn't hate Led Zeppelin" to pointed questions like "Eric Clapton ... a humble votary ... or an arrogant f\*ck?" Like Pauline Kael in the film world, Christgau is a critic of broad experience and interest (the compendium ranges from Seattle to Senegal) who is not prone to pull punches. He may even leave a number of icons with black eyes and bruised egos. Some readers may also find themselves upset to find out what Christgau proposes to know and may find more than a few rude awakenings about their jukebox heroes. Despite a few stratospheric references, the pieces in this collection rarely fail to provoke and shed light at new fractious angles on 75 of the music world's biggest movers. Combining "The King of Pop" and "The Boss" in one essay and Michael Bolton, Garth Brooks, and Barney in another, Christgau makes and breaks the connections and conventions that are the world of rock.

So next time you need to defend Mzwahke Mbuli's contributions to pop or explain why the Beatles broke up ... in one paragraph or less, consult the man who has heard it all and isn't afraid to tell you what he thinks.

- Matthew S Robinson



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Guitarist and Bassist looking to form working band for money. also have original material but main object is cover material. I want to work steadily so im not interested in what you or i are into im into what the public wants to hear. I would like to work in the vein of country, folk, R & B, or pop or any combo of those styles. I am very open to new ideas also with the exception of rap ,hardcore or metal. Also interested in singer songwriters interested in forming band to perform worthy material If you are interested please contact Keljo228@aol.com or call (508) 577 6208~

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Boston based punk rock band w/ CD,shows,and space seeks bass player. You must have transportation, and be able to practice every week. Call Eric at (978) 374-2120 for more info. ~

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Drummer Wanted: Funky classic hits cover band with outstanding female singer looking for pro drummer for upcoming gigs. Free space in Northshore with full drum kit. Band is driven and easy to work with. Have gigs now. Call Alan at (617) 884-0677 Cell# (617) 461-3765 or tuaze@yahoo.com Great Opportunity!!

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Drummer Needed - Singer/guitarist and bassist seek committed drummer 25+ for trio. Many complete original songs ready to go. Rehearse 2-3 times/wk in Boston space. Have management and serious about making things happen. piscceanmusic@yahoo.com or Jamie~

### VOCALIST WANT/AVL

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form (looping riffs, verses/choruses). E-mail to receive tape in the mail. [mikescrima@yahoo.com](mailto:mikescrima@yahoo.com)

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### GUITARIST WANT/AVL

25 yr. old guitarist looking for drummer, singer, 2cnd guitar and bass to form original rock outfit. I have songs written, been playing for 11 years, have a degree in music business, and a jam space in North Reading with an 8-track hard disc recorder. Influences: Van Halen, Zeppelin, Aerosmith, Beatles, Creed, Dream Theater, Rush, AIC. Must be committed and intend to take this as far as it can go. Contact Karl at [kahlil6@hotmail.com](mailto:kahlil6@hotmail.com) or (978) 985-7226.

Lead/rhythm guitar w/back vocals influences include Hendrix, Vaughn, Mike Mcready (Pearl Jam) STP. Want to gig and can learn songs fast, also have song of my own willing to travel. call Adrian@ home(978)562-2290 pager/voice mail (617) 882-0081

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